

THE CARLETON Miscellany

Three Stories

Erling Larsen

Robert Lowry

Jean Malaquais

*Essays, Reviews, Comment on Pound,
Pooh, C. P. Snow, E. M. Forster and
Other Matters*

George P. Elliott

Jack Ludwig

Owen Jenkins

Robert Tracy

Dudley Fitts

Douglas Davis

Twenty Poems

Scott Bates

David Cornel DeJong

Martin Halpern

William S. Hillman

Carolyn Kizer

John Lucas

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Continued on page 128

New Novel New Novel

by

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\$2.25 a copy, postpaid, from the author, Robert Lowry, Apt. 10, 190 Bleecker Street, New York, 12, N.Y.



THE HITCH-HIKER

By JEAN MALAQUAIS

I said, "Thank you," gently closed the door, and the car took off. I stood there, looking on as it turned into a dirt road, its exhaust swirling white in the cool air. That driver in the vanishing sedan was a salesman well satisfied with himself. He never tired of saying, "I, Me, Myself"; but, all the same, he gave me a good lift. I counted on my fingers, then stepped down the shoulder of the big, naked highway. It was my sixth car since I started that very morning on my hitch-hiking trip. I wondered how many miles I had already travelled. Close to five hundred, I thought tentatively, gazing at the low clouds in an attempt to read there the right mileage. Well, four hundred, maybe. Anyway, my best ride was sure to be the next one. Seven is a lucky number, everyone knows that. Not that I believe in numbers, but I needed luck. The dark top of the trees was drawing a sharp line against the heavy sky, and there were batches of blueish hard snow on the ground. Oh, perhaps it was a little less than four hundred miles, after all. Not very much less, though. For all its hardness the snow was thinning down, and even the undergrowth seemed different, I didn't know how to put it — seemed kind of southern to me. I was about to go and take a closer look, but remembering I wouldn't recognize a shrub from a

tomato plant I sniffed instead, cautiously first, then quite boldly. Yes, one could already smell the far away hot sands of the south. I tried again, facing southwards, I even felt less cold, then I faced north to make out the difference, and there was a car coming on at a terrific speed.

I stretched out my arm, and before I could wriggle twice my raised thumb the car came to a stop. I must have been quite lost in my thoughts, for I never heard the tires squeak. Neither did I have to break into a trot to catch up with the car. Cars are proud creatures on the road, with them it is a matter of propriety never to stop right in front of a hitch-hiker. But that one did, the door swung open, and the driver motioned me in. I climbed aboard, hoisted myself atop the front seat. Climbed and hoisted is correct, because the car was tall on its wheels and the seat perched in such a way that my long legs dangled above the floor. I was about to put on a smile and say, "Thank you very much, sir," but the man smiled first and asked in a chanting voice, "How do you do?" I said I was doing fine. It was dim and warm inside, and the engine was running so quietly I wasn't sure it was running at all. Though I refrained from staring at the man, I could see he was an elderly gent with a happy, important nose stuck in a roundish face. He looked squat, rather short next to me, and I wondered how he managed to reach the pedals. The car was an odd, vertical, square-roofed jalopy. The body made me think of those baldachin-topped chairs explorers used way back in the last century. That's how they discovered Africa, being carried around in chairs and putting names on unnamed rivers. I squinted at the dash-board, trying to single out some detail. The first car I picked up that morning had twenty-five dials and seventy-four switches, handles, push-buttons, and such. The seventy-fourth push-button was a dummy. But this jalopy here had no dash-board at all, not the beginning of a dash-board beneath the steering-wheel. She was certainly of European make. They save on extras in those olden countries. When I was in high school, there were two twin brothers, Greek both of them. We used to play together, and once I stayed at

their place till dinner-time. I liked the meal all right, except that the forks and the spoons had sawed off handles. Maybe I looked a little puzzled, because the father of the Greek twins said, "What do you need an extra handle for? Don't you have two God-given handles of your own?" He spoke Greek, and someone had put it into American so I could see the point. I couldn't, I was only eleven then, but now, seven years later, it somehow made sense.

It was growing dark and the man still didn't switch on the lights. Perhaps there were no lights to be switched on. It didn't matter, really. As long as the jalopy had an engine and four legs and was heading south, she was fine. The father of the Greek twins was right: better have soup in your bowl than a handle to your spoon. I wondered how far south the man was traveling. Maybe all the way down, till we met palm trees. What with his chanting voice, he might even be from the south. I wished he were. I wished he would never stop until we saw golden birds nesting in blue waters. Shoulders flat against the straight back of the high-perched seat, feet dangling, hands resting on my knees, I tried to catch the hum of the engine. I should have asked what he did with the sawed off handles, I mean the twins' father. The engine didn't seem to be humming, not to my ear. Two oncoming cars sped by, their lit eyes sweeping the highway, and suddenly I realized we weren't moving at all.

I faced the man and he wasn't there. He was in the back of the car, rummaging about in the darkness.

"A merry Christmas," he said, his voice trailing.

Anger jumped me, making my temples ache. Christmas has never been merry, and I wasn't running away from its clang and clatter to be overtaken in the middle of my flight by a foreign-made jalopy.

"Aren't you moving on?" I asked, clasping my hands to keep them still.

"I understand," he said. "Everyone is eager to join his own."

"My own," I said. "is at the far end of the road."

He said, "Is that so?" and went on rummaging. I didn't know

what to make of him. Maybe he was just fishing for his cigars.

"Do you want me to strike a match for you?" I asked.

He said he was sorry to have kept me in the dark and asked how far was the far end of a road. I fumbled for matches, but before I could use them there was light in the car. If I hadn't been seated, I would have fallen flat on my face. There was a giant lollipop there in the form of a Christmas tree, as real as they come, all sprinkled with candle-shaped bulbs, silver and gold colored ribbons, flakes, sleigh-bells, stars, half-moons, and what not. Squatted like a mushroom beneath a rainbow, a napkin spread over his knees, the man was cutting into an enormous loaf he held edgewise against his chest. There was a bottle of wine on the floor, two glasses, and on a piece of waxpaper, next to a round cheese and a curled sausage, I saw two forks with sawed off handles.

I was still gaping in bewilderment, when he presented me with a big slice of bread at the point of his knife and asked again how far was the far end of a road. No, it couldn't be the same man! The twins' pop didn't know how to say shoo in American, so it couldn't possibly be the same man. I reached without thinking for the bread and said firmly I knew him for the Greek father of two twin Greek brothers.

"Greek?" he wondered, cutting a chunk of sausage. "I come from Brooklyn and my name is Brown. Joe Brown. What's yours, son?"

I said mine was Smith, Joe Smith, and Mr. Brown shook his head with understanding. He stuck one of the forks into the sausage and handed it to me, together with a glass of wine. "Joe," he said, "it's Christmas eve. Have a bite."

"I don't care for Christmas. What for did you saw off the handles?"

He had small, laughing eyes. "Sausage and wine," he said, "are good for runaways."

"I want none of your food. And I am not a runaway."

"Everyone is," he said. "But few run in the right direction."

"Don't you worry, I know my direction all right. What's the

bright idea, anyway, to maim things into stumps?"

"Son," he said, "it is not personal."

"It is!" I cried. "I want to know!"

"Have a little wine," said Mr. Brown.

"What is it?" I cried. "Wherever I look, things seem torn apart!"

"So they are," he said.

"I don't want them to be that way! All year round people back home chop chop chop each other to pieces, then it's today and they flock about the tree, every man on his private crutches, shouting themselves hoarse 'Merry Christmas', and before you know it the chopping starts all over again. I want none of it for myself!"

"Right," he said. "What are you going to do about it?"

"Me? I am going away from it. The farthest I can."

"The farthest a man can go," he said, "is himself."

"Sir," I said, "you talk like a college dean."

Mr. Brown said no more. He ate my sausage and drank my wine. Then he helped himself to a piece of cheese and washed it down with some more wine. I was awfully hungry, but he didn't pay any attention to me. When he was through eating he tapped out, filled and lit his pipe, and as smoke blew from his important nose he smiled happily. In a while he would be pulling out a bed from his sleeve and readying himself for a good night's rest.

"Do you live here?" I asked.

"Look," he said. "It is snowing."

I stuck my face against the windshield. Large, quiet flakes were coming down in slow motion. So I hadn't run fast nor far enough, and it caught up with me.—Snow! I hated the sight of it. Snow was home, it was Christmas back home, it was pa and ma bickering like . . . like . . .

"You know what?" I said. "People are like lizards with chopped off tails: they have lost their steering gear."

"Joe," said Mr. Brown, "some lizards grow new tails."

He had a thatch of white, fluffy hair. I was sorry I had lost my temper. Maybe he was a college dean, after all. But was he

ever going to fold up his lollipop tree and move on? Wanting to avoid a direct question, I took a round-about way and asked if his car was of Greek make.

His answer made me laugh. He said it wasn't a car. And, in a manner, it wasn't. Not next to anything you may think of as a car.

"O.K.," I said. "She isn't. She is Noah's ark."

"You never know," he said.

"Still she is going places, isn't she? May I ask you, sir, how far south you are traveling?"

This time his words made me jump. "What do—do you mean, we aren't heading south?" I stammered, pointing a forefinger at the windshield. "That's where the south is, I know ge—geography. . . ."

"Son," he said, "geography can be wrong."

I rose to my feet and dashed out into the night. Everything was white and silent. I ran for a long time. Steam was gushing from my nostrils, holding me steady on course. Now and again I would cast a glance over my shoulder, but it seemed as if I might have to run for the next thirty years. Then, all of a sudden, a streak of light fired the white road along my thumping legs, and as I turned round I found myself seated in the snow, waving both arms frantically. The headlights grew closer, but I didn't move, I shut my eyes and went on waving my arms, repeating within myself, "Please—Please—Please. . . ."

When I opened my eyes, I was hit by the full blast of the headlights. The car had come to a stop. It was so close I could feel the heat of the engine. I groped for the fenders, pulled myself up, and stood there, blind and panting.

"Boy," said a man's voice, "is anything the matter?"

I caught my breath and shook my head "No."

"Good," said the voice. "What the deuce were you doing there, sitting in the snow on a Christmas night?"

"Sir," I panted, "if you are heading south, could you give me a lift?"

There was a short, hard silence. Though I could see a little

better by now, I groped my way along the car.

"Please. . ." I begged.

"South, did you say?" asked the man.

I swallowed and shook my head "Yes." There was again a silence, and then a loud, merry laughter. I made as if to open the door, and as the man inside did not object I threw myself on the front seat. It was a real American car, and the next second we were gone.

The man let me pant for a while, driving fast through the snow clad night, then he asked me what it was that had frightened me into a ninny. I opened my mouth to say that I wasn't frightened, not the least frightened, but instead I began to blab — to blab like a portable radio. I recounted what had happened, every word, every little detail, and the more I talked the more vividly I saw the whole thing all over again. "He had something in store for me," I was saying. "I am glad I jumped out of him. 'Geography can be wrong. . . .' Can you imagine that? And what did he mean, 'Some lizards grow new tails'? It wasn't just plain zoology he had in mind, I could swear. . . . Can you make it out, sir?"

"Suppose," the man reflected, "suppose Mr. Brown tried to clarify for you a thought which was all your own."

"How's that?" I asked.

"You were the one who spoke first of lizards. Didn't you tell me so, boy?"

"Yes. But what I meant to say was that — that people are like . . . like . . ."

"Like what?"

"Like if they were cut into halves!" I exclaimed.

"Well then," he said.

"I don't get you, sir."

"The idea Mr. Brown thought you wanted to convey was that however a man may be halved, a man still has his other half within himself."

"And it was my own idea?"

"So it seemed," he said.

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"My own idea, that a man has a chance to grow back his . . . his . . . to grow into full shape, like a lizard?"

"Well, almost," he said.

"How do you know that's what Mr. Brown tried to make clear for me?"

"I know," he said.

"How can you know for sure?" I asked in a voice that sounded awfully quarrelsome.

"Boy," he said, driving fast, "I should know. I am Mr. Brown."

• CAROLYN KIZER

POEM, SMALL AND DELIBLE

We have been picketing Woolworth's.

This page, some day, under the Poetry Decoder
Set for 20, Mid-Century, Western, White, Decline,
A brown tatter pinned beneath a lens
Will stall here: What is the verb, "to picket?"
And what, a Woolworth? A form of primitive market?
Perhaps they weighed and sorted fleece, then sold it.

We have been picketing Woolworth's.

It is mysterious to many, even now:
Thirty-six people sweating and circling
Woolworth's on a summer's day, in a northern town.
Three spectators ask: What *Is* Segregation?
You Should Be Ashamed!!! SIT-INS. What's them?
Laboriously picking out syllables

From our home-made posters, picketing Woolworth's.

Notes for the student: Woolworth's, one of a series
Of regional emporia, privately owned, and under
A centralized management, designed to cater
To mass taste and income . . . Picket: See PIKE a weapon.
2) A pointed or sharpened stake, a peg or pale.
Or, 3) A sentry, set to guard an army.

And so we walked with words impaled on stakes:

Support Our Southren Brothren. Boycott Woolworth's.
(From *Boycott*, a notorious Irish captain.)
Sit-ins? But the words are baffling, as arcane
As poems. Who cares, lady? I'd picket Woolworth's
Any day, on general principles. Indignation:
Why don't you people leave poor old Woolworth's alone?

We, paying homage to Mohandas Gandhi,

Cast our hand-written signs, our unwritten poems
On his pyre. Here the decoder won't stutter
Nor the lens hesitate. They will know who *he* was,
And that Art and Action, mostly incompatible,
Could support each other now and then. Voici
Que j'ai dessein encore d'un petit poème délébile

Picketing Woolworth's.

• PAUL PETRIE

CORPUS DELECTI

On the bad days
it seems
something you hide on the top shelf
of the closet.

From the head down
it's odd,
and feet up
is lecherous.
And soon
smugness flies
from all angles.
The ears protrude,
the white belly
rounds like a toad's
the legs are delusions of grandeur,
and in between —
fig-leaves.

Granted
on a good day at the beach
I've watched for hours;
but mostly summer seems
an insane asylum of pride.

After the first thunder
and creator's dazzle
lifted,
it must have hurt His eyes
His own image.

PAUL PETRIE

(Half the hills of the world
are discarded gods.)

But while the war goes on,
and all those granite soldiers dot the hills,
it can be worn
with a certain pride.

NIGHT BLOOM

Feeding
on the diminishing
dark,
a moon the size of delight
grows in the sky.

The blank, furtive alleys
abandon their shadows;
buildings surrender their shafts
of interior night;
and in the park, the birds
annihilate the woods.

In the plot of myself
I crouch,
a dismayed gardener
weeding.
"Why don't you grow," says the flower,
"the size of the sun?"

• SCOTT BATES

FABLE
OF THE TRANSCENDENT SKYLARK

A skylark bored by what he saw
Of earth's unalterable law
And painfully afflicted by
A predetermined sea and sky
Resolved to abdicate the *here*
In favor of a higher sphere
Anywhere he often groaned
Just so it lies hors de ce monde
(I must remark in his defense
That early sex experience
His father's death when he was three
A vitamin deficiency
A double yoke etc.
Had helped to complicate his moi
And make his pure artistic mind
Intolerant of the other kind)
Therefore he soared And as he went
Intoned a dirge of discontent
Which changed in substance as he flew
And more horizon hove in view
Until at twenty thousand feet
It overflow'd as blithely sweet
As any Ariel could wish
Who wrote a book on Percy Bysshe
But scarcely had he passed outside
The five-mile zone when rarefied
And predetermined atmosphere
Put two tail-feathers out of gear
And cast a coat of ice upon
His secondary aileron

So that he ceased all upward flight
At minus forty fahrenheit
Pulled in his wings began to doze
Sang three discouraged chords and froze
You'd think this fate might have deterred
Ambitions in another bird
To flee the earth and earthly things
By means of vocal chords and wings
But such is not the case For still
From every meadow moor and hill
Transcendent birds go upward wheeling
To bash their brains out on the ceiling

FABLE
OF THE ROMANTIC NIGHTINGALE

A nightingale I know
Has learned to speak
Romance languages
She has forgotten Greek

And although she still sings
In the middle of the night
Like Homer
And still calls Tereu with all her might

I find her now in hedgerows
Of a summer's day
Whistling *Lucia*
Or reading plays by Alfred de Musset

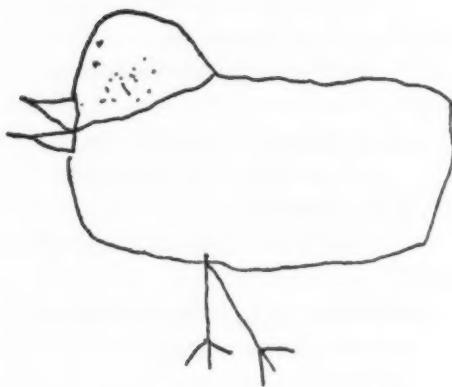
SCOTT BATES

FABLE
OF THE EXISTENTIALIST LEAF

An existentialist leaf
Having burst from a branch
By reason of season
And sap circumstance

Was released by a powerful
Wind from the tree
Help screamed the leaf
I'm condemned to be free

After dropping him in a
Petunia bed
You're wrong said the wind
You're condemned to be dead



THIS BURDEN, IDENTITY

By JACK LUDWIG

The campus is a microcosm, the big bad world in little, with the same ratio of the seeing to the unseeing, the live to the dead, the committed to the uncommitted that prevails Out There. Revolutions within the self occur more frequently on campus than off: a book, a lecture, a conversation may cause the opening of once-closed eyes and the beginning of a radically new life. But in this microcosm you may see the cigar-smoking, car-polishing, beer-sipping, enjoyment-enjoying, TV-watching American prol, or the eternal frat boy putting in his indentures as student so he can go out into the middle-class suburban world of advertising or executiving as Alumnus. And among these, in ratio of, say, one to fifty live the stirrers, the uneasy, the questioners.

America is becoming the country in which nobody knows what to think, what to feel, what to do. Responses are taught by Ann and Abby, buffering clichés by Peale's yea-saying sermons. The great success of television and the movies comes not because they entertain but because they *do* provide models for emotional responses to birth, marriage, death, crisis. Before a student hits campus he's courted by the Wise: clothiers teach him how to *look* collegiate, eternal college-boy relatives tell him of College Life, record companies tell him what to sing, and how to. Once on campus he's wooed by the Wiser who, on a return-to-the-'20's kick, teach raccoon coaternity, hip flaskness, traditions of men collegiate — how to get and keep a C average, how to say "great," "gung-ho," "really" in proper rhythms which, successful, communicate nothing. The uneasy questioners to them parallel the egghead enemies of their fathers: "greasy grinds," "so-called intellectuals." On campus, as off, thought is looked on as peculiar. To be serious damages the burgher idea of college as Fun.

What the thinking student experiences in little, then, is the

opposition to concern and involvement central to American majoritarian attitudes. From his own point of view (not yet jaded), everything seems clear. Segregation is wrong. Atomic fallout is a great danger. Africa could be a disaster. He wants to touch history. He wants an identity *in* history. He can't *believe* the world is as ridiculous as it appears, and as uncomprehending of the possibilities of disaster. But he's bewildered by contradictions; he remembers fun-loving America, incensed by a football coach's unsuccess, hanging or burning that unsuccess in effigy while at the same time Liking Ike for golfing, bridging and losing touch with U-2's, Cuba, Africa, Fort Knox.

Here in midwestern America a year ago, a group of serious students on the campus of the University of Minnesota, anxious to do more than *applaud* Negro college students trying to break through in the South, organized a motorcade to Nashville, Tennessee. Picketing Woolworths and W. T. Grant in the *North* seemed an empty gesture, a mere post card when what was needed was callers. The motorcade was set up for Easter Week, great attempts were made to awaken and alert the student body: petitions of solidarity between white and black, North and South were signed—over 900 names were sent south. But when the motorcade was set to leave, only 12 students out of over 25,000 were in it: three automobiles out of the thousands that overflow parking lots for miles around a large city campus. The gesture might have been naive; the accomplishment might be negligible; the students' motives might have been mixed and complicated. The important thing was that they recognized doubleness and were not coerced into inaction by it. Perhaps the trek was in the interests of that great American drive for Experience. Or curiosity. Or excitement. Perhaps guilt made them seek out violence. The point is this, though: twelve students left the larks of Easter vacation and made their move to Nashville.

They met more than they bargained for—harassment from police officers who got on their tails and followed them all the way into the city. Unleashed hoods and no-goodniks zoomed by them, around them, blocked them, gunning their hot-rods, shout-

ing the clichés analogous to the party-boy slogans familiar from campus. It's hard for the intelligent to accept the fact that any human life, worse, an entire community, can sum itself up in "would you want your sister to marry a nigger?"

They met the girls who had had cigarettes ground into their flesh while they sat-in, and who had restrained their escorting male negro students from turning violent and inviting riot. What was abstract they knew now as concrete, and terrible. To be a Negro was to live below the Law, to be denied *absolutely* the identity whose absence these Northerners felt as pain.

But it was when they came back to the North that the surprise awaited them: the party-boys and good-timeniks fell back on majoritarian righteousness, said the students had taken the name of the University in vain, that they were publicity seekers, exhibitionists, radicals — the usual stuff. Investigations were called for (once called for they never have to be made): public denunciation by Administrative officers was hoped for (this too never came). The crime was the disturbance of the college spirit, the interruption of Fun-seriousness.

I tell this story to indicate that though something *is* stirring on American campuses, resistance to it is as great as the outside world's. As a result the serious student's feeling is that the world is being loused up by the stupid, the lazy, the tired, the infirm. He shares with the "beats" on American campuses the impulse to reject puffery and flummery, State Department handouts, White House explanations; but the "Beats" are, of course, as hoked up as the stiffniks they're attacking. Beatniks are largely submarginal — small talent but loud sound, knuckle-headed but intense, so blackly grim as to seem highly serious. Identity for the "beats" is a matter of dress: appear in black and you're an artist: bleach your face and you have a fine feminine soul: grow a beard and you suffer like Christ, paint like Van Gogh, write like, say, Hemingway (the "beats", I should also say, lack a sense of scale). But the "beats" as a *symptom* are something else again: they parody, are Alexandrian versions of something real — disillusion with the institutional world and everything it says and

pretends about itself. Fake love of country, fake religious observance, fake attempts to get at problems like disarmament, fall-out, international crises. The beatnik bleat is a parody of the Existentialist questioning; it is an oversimplified and foolishly scattered version of Protest. No beat went to Nashville; he would have considered it a betrayal of his 19th century nihilistic views!

For years after the second War, the campus was a place of normalcy and the great cry was "apathy, apathy, apathy." The sudden surge of interest in desegregation from coast to coast is an indication — however few the people actively connected with this movement — that something new is happening all over America. The rallying to *do* something for the cause of their southern fellow students, the setting up of committees local, regional, national, the strange sight of Ivy League students taking *their* Easter Vacation to picket the White House in hopes of helping the Negro students and their sit-in cause, indicate a change is in the making.

Student activity during the election of 1960 was brisker and far more enthusiastic than it was in 1952 or 1956. Letters to the editor columns in student newspapers these days are much more concerned with matters international, the debate between left and right, conservative and liberal, than they were five or six years ago. Numerically, I repeat, the students engaged in serious thought and work do not dominate any institution I know about; but their numbers have increased and are increasing.

One of the things one hopes for from the Kennedy stint now beginning is that he *will* address himself, as Stevenson surely would have, to the overwhelming questions — not merely the problems of national and international policy, but to the great issues of this time. Civil liberties; the need, for a basically uninformed electorate, to be taught the meaning of academic and institutional freedom; party and representational reorganization which will revolutionize the Democratic and Republican parties and, in time, bring liberals to one party and conservatives to the other, making the city vote share the power now resting in rural areas. These are the Causes students could commit themselves to.

The other change Kennedy might bring about is a return to the scale students could make sense of: during the time of Roosevelt the ideas a student encountered *on* campus had something to do with what was happening in the centers of power: during the time of Eisenhower the gap between the academy and government grew wider and wider, and the NAM version of the Ivory Tower of Impracticability and Horny Tower of Fiscal Responsibility dominated the country. Nonsense about theory and practice was prated as gospel. What Kennedy may do is return the campus to a place in American destiny and, in doing this needed rescue work, involve students in the possibility of attaining an identity *in* history, on a public level. During the Eisenhower administration the number of bright students preparing for government service went into a sad decline — his attitude toward ideas more than his silence on McCarthy was the important factor, I'm certain. Kennedy has the opportunity of starting a new surge on American campuses. The apathy came largely, I suggest, from Washington. Everything to the sensitive student seemed senseless: not his voice, not that of his professors could reach the centers where decisions were made. Now he hopes to be heard again.

The greatest hope on and off campus is, of course, that the standards of the majority will, in time, change. The presence of a man of some cultural awareness and intellectual interests in the White House could help to elevate the taste of the country generally: the 'thirties were a time of economic and political change and reform which the 'sixties cannot be (since the 'thirties accomplished its aims, largely); the 'sixties will be, if successful, a time of social, intellectual and artistic awakening. An eight-year reign of benign philistinism is at an end: the powerlessness felt by the thoughtful in America should end with it.

Fins have already fallen off the motorcars — a significant stage in American evolution. The face of America no longer seems set in a "No!" The slogans have been dragged to the dump — "massive retaliation," "the brink," "liberation of captive peoples," "detection of atomic explosions impossible," "dangers of infla-

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tion," "working vacations"—the voice of Hagerty is silent in the land.

On a still night one hears the sounds of history — men in space, rockets to Venus, Africa exploding. An identity *in* history beckons, at least as a *possibility*. An identity, a burden. This new white-shoe man's burden.

• RONALD OFFEN

POET AS BAD GUY

(For Kenneth Rexroth)

I like to enter small, jerkwater towns
with engine roaring, then rock to a stop
and park before a group of local clowns
to make a cigarette-dangling entrance.
I glance past them with a frown,
puffing, turning my collar up,
and digging my hands deep down
in my trench-coated stealth;
then weasel my eyes around
for some unknown assailant and proceed.

I like to imagine skulking by
they think I'm some professional syndicate-hood
ex-convict, or disreputable private eye
lusty with revenge or foxy malice,
come to douse with gasoline the chimney
of the mayor, to swell the bellies
of their best examples of virginity,
or rubber-hose their schoolmarm editor
whose outraged expose in the *Monthly
Journal* led to my untimely downfall.

I'd like to pull it off
just once, get past that sweet old frump
grandmothering me a smile that scoffs:
you naughty boy, you've been off drowning cats
or making bombs again, but we love
you just the same. And in a way, I guess
they do. At least I can't maintain the bluff
when the flat bellies of their girls shake
with giggles but not terror. It's too much.
I button the top button of my hate
against the piercing onslaught of their love
and smile, to show I'm just a country boy at heart.



• JOHN MONTAGUE

THE FIRST INVASION OF IRELAND

According to *Leabhar Gabhála*, The Book of Conquests, the first invasion of Ireland was by relatives of Noah, just before the Flood. Refused entry into the Ark, they consulted an idol which told them to flee to Ireland. There were three men and fifty-one women in the party and their behaviour has so little in common with subsequent tradition in Ireland that one must take the story to be mythological.

Fleeing from threatened flood, they sailed,
Seeking the fair island, without serpent or claw;
From the deck of their hasty windjammer watched
The soft edge of Ireland nearward draw.

A sweet confluence of waters, a trinity of rivers,
Was their first resting place:
They unloaded the women and the sensual idol,
Guiding image of their disgrace.

Division of damsels they did there,
The slender, the tender, the dimpled, the round;
It was the first just bargain in Ireland,
There was enough to go round.

Lightly they lay and pleased
In the green grass of that guileless place:
Ladhra was the first to die;
He perished of an embrace.

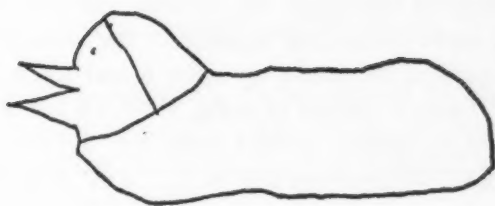
Bith was buried in a stone heap,
Riot of mind, all passion spent.
Fintan fled from the ferocious women
Before he, too, by love was rent.

Great primitive princes of our line
They were the first, with stately freedom,

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To sleep with women in Ireland:
Soft the eternal bed they lie upon.

On a lonely headland the women assembled,
Chill as worshippers in a nave,
And watched the eastern waters gather
Into a great virile flooding wave.



THE KEEPSAKE

by

ROBERT LOWRY

To Ruth Virginia Lowry

"But why keep him?" Lenore wanted to know. "Why? Haven't you finished with your lion phase? Haven't we had enough of all that, Tom? And this one — well — you can call him a lion if you want to — poor toothless creature that he is. Look at him over there. Can he still see three feet in front of him? Can he even so much as *move*? Well, he hasn't moved in the last hour — I've been watching him. He's become a kind of monumental doorstep, that's it! He might as well be made of wood or iron or plaster or stone. Really, Tom, give us some peace here — give us some *room* — get rid of him!"

Lenore stopped speaking, not because she was exhausted or had nothing more to say, but because of the look that had come on Tom's face, and the dead-grey color it had taken on. Oh dear, she thought. Once a fancier of lions, always a fancier of lions, I suppose. And it doesn't matter whether they're cubs, when they're cute, or whether they're as old as Methuselah, like this one.

"There! He moved!" Lenore said suddenly, staring across the room at the great old mangy beast who was lying in a raised alcove, his big pie-plate-size paws dangling over into the room proper. "Didn't he, Tom? He immediately assumes such an absolutely monumental stillness that I can't be sure from one minute to the next that he *did* move! There — he batted his eyes. . . . Will you, Tom? Promise me? In the next week?"

"Will I promise you what?" Tom asked.

"Promise me that you'll get rid of him. I don't mean — kill him, necessarily. Maybe you can find a zoo that'll take him. Or if you want to go to all the expense, ship him back to Africa or India or wherever he comes from or his ancestors or whatever, and

have him turned loose. He doesn't have long to live anyhow —"

"He wouldn't live very long in the bush or the jungle, that's for sure," Tom said. "Toothless like that? I wouldn't do it to him. And I'm not thinking of the fifteen hundred dollars or more of shipping charges, either. He probably wouldn't arrive alive."

"I didn't mention the smell," Lenore went on. "But I think that I should. I've considered moving more than once, Tom, because of that mangy old lion. He has a kind of — *metallic* smell about him, sometimes. And sometimes he smells like — like old fruit, old rotting plums or something of the sort. Over-ripe peaches. I can even smell it upstairs in my room. It really isn't very pleasant to have to live with, Tom."

"Pleasant or not," Tom said, still looking rather sternfaced but gradually regaining his natural coloring, "Old Goriot stays."

"Even if I don't?"

"Even if you don't, Lenore."

"Old Goriot!" she said quietly, with a deprecating laugh, glancing disparagingly at the beast up there at the other end of the room. "Why you had to name him Old Goriot I'll never know either."

Tom raised his eyebrows. "I happen to be an admirer of Honoré de Balzac," he said, "and Old Goriot happens to be one of Balzac's major creations. So there you are. Purely admiration. A great novel — a great beast."

The old lion had raised his head slightly at the sound of his name and was looking over at them.

"I doubt very much if he can see us," Lenore said.

"Don't be too sure."

Tom's tone sounded almost menacing to her, and she looked sharply at her brother.

"Tom, I think you like that lion better than you do me."

"I like that lion," Tom told her simply, "better than I do *anyone*, my dear."

Lenore shuddered slightly and reached a cigarette from the end table. Her brother seemed absorbed in Old Goriot and so she took her own light from the table lighter. Now her eyes too

turned towards the old beast over there and as she gazed at him, his heavy, over-ripe smell offensive in her nostrils, a curious plan began to take shape in her mind. Tonight? she thought. Shall I really attempt it this very night?

"Dinner is served, Madam," Hilda said, appearing in the doorway. And looking at her master, Hilda added, "And Goriot's meat is prepared, sir."

Lenore turned her head aside at the sound of the word "meat." It would be so *much* meat, she knew — pounds of bloody red hamburger on that big wooden platter which Goriot always ate from with growls and grunts and the slop-slop of his big toothless mouth.

Yes, tonight, Lenore thought. It has to be tonight — I'll go mad if I spend another day in this house with that ugly toothless old thing. So tonight it is!

"Come on, old boy," Tom was saying as he leaned over Old Goriot. "Time to put on the feed bag, old boy."

Perhaps this will be the last time I ever hear *that*, Lenore thought, and left the room quickly, her plan big and alive within her.

Lenore had learned to shoot in Kenya from a hunter and guide named Thomas Rainey Orangely who had been most kind and most solicitous in teaching her the finer points of aiming and firing a big-game gun. She still owned both of the guns that she had used on the safaris that she and Tom had made a dozen or fifteen years ago; and although they seldom left the States on their vacations now, the guns still hung in the gun room, among Tom's famous collection that had more than once been the subject of magazine pieces and the envy of other collectors.

Late that night, in a dark sleeping house as still as a church at three in the morning, Lenore, dressed only in her kimono and slippers, crept down from her room next to Tom's on the second floor and entered the gun room. Using a flashlight but lighting no lamps, she could see her Barrington 105 with the multi-lensed Telfor sight where it hung near the fireplace. She took it down and loaded it, then went out, carrying the heavy piece under her

arm with a remembered almost-professional ease that amazed her and that might have made Thomas Rainey Orangely proud of his pupil; and unlocked the cellar door and started down with only the flashlight to show her way.

Although Old Goriot's sleeping cage was on the far side of the basement, she could hear the lion's heavy breathing even from way over here on the stairs. Her plan, quite simply, was to shoot from the stairs, and this she did, holding the flashlight in her left, or forward hand, up by the barrel, so that the beam of light, the line of the sights and the heavy charge that she fired as she squeezed the trigger were all trained exactly and precisely on a spot immediately above, and centered between, the huge old animal's two big and unblinking eyes staring blindly at her.

The explosion of the Barrington 105 brought Tom and all three of the servants on the run from their various sleeping quarters in the big old house above her. As soon as Tom came down the basement stairs, Lenore held out the gun to him and lowered her head, affecting great fright and shock.

"Why you shot him!" Tom was saying. "You shot Old Goriot! You *killed* him — you absolute bitch you!"

"I — thought I heard a prowler," Lenore whispered, perhaps a little too readily, for she had been rehearsing this very line to herself all evening. "I — it must have been Old Goriot, but I thought I heard something and so I took the gun and came down here. Oh Tom, I didn't mean to hurt him. Is he all right?"

"He's dead," Tom said. "He's stone dead. You shot him right between the eyes. Do you really expect me to believe your crazy story about hearing a prowler? You heard Old Goriot, obviously, and you knew he was down here. I think you *intended* to kill him —"

"No, really, Tom, I —"

"I think you did," Tom said. All of the lights in the basement were on now and Lenore could see the servants over there, crowded around the cage and staring in at the dead beast. "I think you deliberately came down here and shot Goriot simply because you despised him. Now why don't you admit it, Lenore."

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"I can't admit it. It isn't true. I loved him too. I wouldn't have done anything like this."

"You loved him too?"

"Yes! Yes! Of course I did — I loved him as much as you did. Oh I complained about him, it's true. I even thought you ought to get rid of him. But I loved him, even so."

"In that case," Tom said, "I'm going to make you a present of him. A keepsake. I am going to have him stuffed and you shall have him as a present from me — for your room."

"For my *room*?"

"Yes. He'll be stuffed and he can sit over there between the windows in your room — if you'd prefer him not stuffed I'll just drag him in there now."

"But he'll scare me, Tom. When I wake up at night."

Tom smiled his odd little smile at her. "Yes," he answered. "I daresay he will."

• NANCY SULLIVAN

A FLAT POEM ABOUT THE HILL

Red, white, and navy blue, the black out,
The rainbows in Roosevelt's voice.
Many colors is the memory of a war.
The only khaki I remember is an uncle.

Today on black and white television (it is Sunday)
I watch a program about Monte Cassino,
Where I once went on a bus in a peaceful summer.
Aboard was an Englishman who had fought in the battle.
He ran up and down that cage of the bus as it lurched up and down
The blazing white Arizona streets of the town,
His gun a camera. I refused to share his vision,
And his wife turned lukewarm eyes to the message of this
geography.

Up, up the hill we spiralled. Below, the new town looked a
Levittown,
Above, the new monastery looked the fortress it once was.
The monks were having lunch and our guide, a blond war widow,
Argued wildly in that language of cheese and tomatoes
Before we got in and a small monk with his hands in his sleeves
Like a muff took us to see what there was to see
And led us to wonder at the bouncyness of man, how well he
repairs himself.
A uniform enveloped the Englishman, although it was tweed
And the rank unmarked. He was an insider among outlanders.

On the television, the camouflaged men scratch
Up and up the barbed hills to the monastery.
Someone (bad guys) shoots them down.
The scene shifts to an office lined with dictionaries.
An ex-German general in an English jacket
Explains that there really weren't any Germans
In that holy dwelling, only the monks
Sweetly singing. Next we're back at the war;
A chunky abbot beats it into a waiting car.
He is being taken to sign a statement
Saying that there really weren't any Germans up there,
So-help-me-God. So I guess there weren't any Germans up there.
The show goes on although the war is over.

I've often felt guilty about that Englishman and thought to make
A poem of him, pretending that the defective poem might
compensate for
My neglect. The television program proved that no Germans
were up there.
Now that Englishman can pick up his gear and clear out of my
conscience.
He is Charlie Chaplin; he is King Lear, ironic as a salute in the
rain.

• BARRY SPACKS

THE STROLLING CROW

1.

Clumping along down the college walk like a proper
man on a morning stroll
Comes a funny old crow
As wide a crow
As tall and sleek and true a crow
As you'd ever see.

As nice a crow as I'll ever be.

I didn't expect to meet a crow in just that way.
Pompous crow, paunchy crow,
Sharp and fat as a muscle-flex.
Left-step out, peck-glance, step right,
Humorous crow, pretentious crow,
Locus of light — disinterested light.

Yet, goodness knows, the cause of the crow's
Strange strolling here
Is clear as clear:

A crow can't hover
In the empty air
Forever.

2.

But you wouldn't expect a crow to strut
Like a jay or swallow;
Crows in the cornfield flopping up:
Flies in a bottle.
Crows on the highway nailing down
A sometime rabbit;

Crows on the housetops, crows on the lawn:
Beaks rivet.

Matched with vulture, raven, kite?
That's okay, except they're gayer:
Loveable: more horrible: just-bathed-child
Operates and dolly cries.
Come *strolling* crow, crow *civilized*,
Anything's possible!

3.

I take this crow for my emblem beast
In the game we play, "Expose Your Soul,"
At faculty parties.

Even though
That Grand Massif, moustached and piped,
Who teaches history — man you'd think
Would plonk for a lion — says
"Gazelle,"
Few'd choose a crow;
Not even though
Our loveliest lady often picks
Pike in the lake
And once a snake
— Surprise, surprise, until we guessed
She was tired that night, she was feeling like a saint,
She was dreaming of the sun on her saurian back.

But a *crow*?

4.

That's me, that's me — big old crow,
Black as a splinter of anthracite coal,
Bumpy old umbrella in a fumbly wind,

Hard without if soft within,
Sure and clean as a painted skull —
And shiny as a pocketcomb:
Frightened by a stuffedshirt:
Awkward as a torn sheet flapping on the laundry line:
Rinsowhite turned insideout.

An honest creature
Rapacious in my nature
Formal dress and
Agile eye,
Clumping down the college path,
Glancing right, glancing left
At those legs that mean the death
Or life of a man.

Old crow, pass on!

ON HER ABSENCE

When she is gone I roll in bed,
My body rolls but does not stop
Against her body.

I roll on lonely nights around the world,
Ease past myself on the other side at morning;

My eyes are helpless at their constant darting,
As if they had spun full round in the slick curved walls

And even the prodigal force of love
Goes spuming along like a beachless sea,
Breaking itself upon itself,

Till she return, and I return

HI, HO, FIDELITY!

By ERLING LARSEN

The whisky was burning cold, tasteless in his throat, the rim of the bottle so icy dry on his lips that he put it back into the glove compartment after one swallow. He started the engine, turned the headlights on, and sat and watched the snow and the night. He could see no other car, no walking man or garbage-sniffing dog, for even the edges of the parking lot, the gate, the woven wire fence with the prohibitory hanging names of doctors, were either deep in a darkness he could actually see as an end to sight, or lost in a darkness which itself was lost behind the big-flaked heavy-falling snow, behind a depthless measureless brightness on flashing brightness. Then he drove slowly, probing, searching the untracked untouched whiteness of the streets until he came among the houses and the lights, the votive wreaths and blessed holy trees, where he switched the radio on, his arm flipping out at the controls the way it would in reflex jerk when tapped at one certain delicately-marked precisely-found ganglion with a finely-shaped expensive rubber-ended hammer, and got in quickly growing volume the three, or was it four or two, anyway called sisters who in a very gravelly voice, that was it, voice in the singular because as voices they were undistinguishable, were singing good-night to some sweetheart who presumably stood helplessly by, overwhelmed, smothered in screeches, as they scratched out their collective oompah-rythmed hag-voiced farewell which came now to him, the driver, Banville, in the dry-heated darkly-enclosed car as a witch-like not only good-night but query as to when shall we three, or four, or however many, meet again. He turned them off, the wierd-voiced sisters, and drove slowly on down the quiet streets, carefully down the easy slopes to Center Street, coming finally almost sneakingly under the evergreen arches, each electrically wired up high against the night, each heavy with its spaced clouds of whirling red and green and blue snow.

He stopped the car at the curb. It was supper time. On the whole long straight street there were only a dozen, merchants', cars, looking hunched and awkward with the snow piled on them, and along the sidewalks were no people, no tracks in the window-lighted yellow-reflecting deepening snow. Empty, watching emptiness, he sat with the engine running, listening to the heater spin and blow, the windshield wipers sigh and bang, the loose belt somewhere under the hood squeak woodenly erratically. Then he cut the switch, stopping everything. Silently the snow spattered and crinkled on the windshield, ran in blobs down to the hood which was wet with slushy transparent watery snow thawed by the engine's heat. Nothing moved now that he could see but the snow.

He had parked right outside the music store. He got out of the car and stood still in the quiet street, listening to the secret sound of the snow sifting through the air and settling and piling and packing down under its own weight. The ringing in the ears, he thought, a sign like the squeaking of the slipping belt. He swung his arm to swipe a spattering arc of slush from the hood of the car and went quickly suddenly into the store.

"I'll buy the player," he said before the old man who owned the place could even get off the stool where he sat mumbling at a sandwich which had a thin tatter of pink waxy ham hanging from it. "You got one in a carton not opened?"

"Yah," the old man said. He was spreading a paper napkin on the counter and putting his sandwich down, re-assembling it carefully as he chewed a slow smacking mouthful.

"I'll write you a check."

"If it's convenient," the old man said. "You know me, Counsellor, and I know you. If you don't got it—"

"I got it," Banville said. "And for Christ's sake don't spoil this gladsome season by calling me that."

"I should call you *Dichter*?" he asked. "Poet?"

The old man had his sandwich re-stacked now. He wiped his fingers on his handkerchief, looking at his customer, and he said, "I hear about the Missus. How goes —?"

"She goes fine," Banville said. "And so do the Misses Banville. All five. As of this afternoon all six."

"Another yet," the old man said. "Tonight you celebrate."

Banville didn't answer.

"It's a present," the old man said. "The player a present for the family? It's very nice. Like olden days we always—"

"Sure," Banville said. "Pianos. Olden days pianos always. You selling so many you even had a factory. We *all* have troubles."

"Mr. Banville," the old man said. "You're celebrating maybe already? Maybe too much?" He was speaking softly, gently, leaning forward a little.

"I'm sorry," Banville said. And when the old man answered nothing, but only stood with his hands still folded wiping in his handkerchief, he said, "Those piano days you always talk about. I'm remembering, too."

"So you buy a player for the family."

"It's a present for me," Banville said. "I just decided."

The old man nodded and turned to the back room. In the doorway he stopped. "You want the dark, Mr. Banville?"

"No blonde," Banville said.

"*Dichter*," the old man said, going. Then he returned to the doorway and said, "Like in the ad, you can have ten dollars of records with the machine. You should get some of those fidelities. You should play something on this kind of machine besides those old scratchy ones you get from junk-dealer."

"Scratchy but not gravelly," Banville said. "You have the fidelities from New Orleans?"

"They call them fidelities," the old man said and waved at the racks of records and was then really gone into the darkness of the back room where Banville could see him flicking a flashlight on and off and hear him sliding cartons with a sandy rushing sound across the floor.

Banville looked at the names. They were there, racked on the wall where the old man had pointed. Names that he'd seen on rain-soaked banners in Louisiana, that he'd heard in saloons in Texas, heard his father speak sometimes mumbling sometimes

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screaming, that he now knew best on the spirally-scratched needle-jabbed labels centered on his greying old records, they were here now bright and big and block-lettered on the glossy red and yellow all-holidayed cardboard envelopes. Armstrong, the Louis himself, Ory and Noone, even Rena the almost forgotten Kid, and Picou, Alphonse of the name romantic and swash-buckling, all the Counts and the Kings who had ruled and reigned over that gone lost faded fog-swirling world, all the Kids who had poured themselves out, reigning by pouring Banville thought, the salt therefore of the musical earth, all here "re-issued" and, yes, even resurrected in high fidelity, in a fidelity to match their own faithfulness to their own dreams. Which were of what? Of fair music and friendly women? Dreams which became flesh in a flash in the writing of tunes like *The Pearls* for a Mexican hash-house waitress, like *The Crave* for a covey of Spanish whores, a most Elizabethan dream now recorded as fulfilled for all time and encased in a shining platitudinous sleeve with scholarly printed program notes, most critically verbose, and a dozen under-exposed more black than white photographs. Banville picked out three of them and stood holding them.

The old man, back with the player, said, "I'd been smart I'd be in the electric business like Callahan and sell the records on the side." He put the carton on the counter.

Banville laid the records on the carton. He looked past the old man at the big colored photographs of the blue-lidded blonde lying on her stomach but holding up her sleepy head, her chin in her hand, her salmon-tinted breasts flowing out of her pleated pale-blue nightgown. He said, "Music for moonlight. Music to moon over. Music to dream by. Have a dream and all you do is wake up scared. Scared or if it's the other kind, empty. How much do I owe you? In money," he said putting his hands against the edges of the records, squaring the pile neatly on the player carton. "So dreaming I shall go home to my empty house which —"

"Empty?"

"Everybody who can walk. Everybody that is but me. And

she. And she. Everybody going to the program. Complete with crepe-paper wings on coat-hanger frames. Or with burnooses of the old old year-old drapes outlawed by the latest issue of *Better Pigs in Better Parlors*.

"My empty house. To have in celebration. Five celebrating drinks. No six. As of today it's six. Six solitary drinks." Then, picking up the sleeved records and holding them edged straight on the carton, "How much do I owe you? In money."

And so it was accomplished that he carried the player and the records to the car and put them in the front seat and went around to the driver's side and got in and drove slowly through the still stilly falling snow to the driveway by his garage by the kitchen door of his house where he stopped the car, the wheels slowing crunching the wet snow, and carried his music in, very carefully holding it with his left hand and arm, at the door balancing it on his half-raised left thigh and squeezing it against his stomach as he opened the storm door and leaned against it holding it as he opened the inner door. The kitchen was bright, fluorescent light reflecting surgery daylight blue from the blue walls, but it was, as he had predicted it would be, empty of people. Bright and strangely empty, empty as before a surprise party when people are about to burst screaming and banging beer-bottles and bread-tins out of closets and stairwells and from behind doors, strangely deadly quiet as the remembered quiet you imagine having preceded a sudden still echoing thunder-clap on a hot summer night with even the frogs and crickets silently awaiting the burst. Empty and bright the house, with all, yes all, the lights burning in the bedrooms and the basement, on the stairway, all shining brightly for the birthday of the new lady and mistress.

Blinking, frowning, Banville carried his music to the middle of the rug in the parlor where he stood holding it, coat and gloves still on and warming, looking at the tree with the lights strung but with no tinsel hung or balls affixed, red streamers still rolled up in boxes at its base, thinking of the time last year or two years ago when he'd called this room the parlor with the

preacher sitting on the davenport and the five girls on the floor near the tree, the youngest in a growing circle of dark dampness, and he'd been making a drink in the kitchen and walked into this room to find the preacher and had said something about welcome to the Banville parlor house, using his best remembered Cajun accent which had been lost on preacher as had been also lost the joke, preacher out of ignorance smiling his benignest smile. And she? Had understood, had smiled and immediately frowned.

He still frowned himself, looking behind him at the clumped melting snow on the rug, Banville his spoor. But he put the carton down at what looked like the very center of the rug and walked around it three times and then he got down on his knees, the skirts of his coat hampering him, and opened it and crawled around the tree to steal an extension cord. And then he put the new records on and the music came, at first like something he'd never heard before, giving him a strangely physical feeling of square solid blocks of sound being piled one two three four up and up in the room from corner to corner with a matter-of-fact inevitability filling all the space he had to move in and then the first trombone solo rocked out loudly forthrightly declaring the triumph of earth and dark flesh and Banville sighed and took off his coat and threw it on the davenport and went to the kitchen to make the scheduled celebrating numbered one drink.

He drank it fast and made numbered two which he carried, the music following now loud in hallways and now muffled as if remembered only or heard across a hot mosquito-swarming muddy-smelling fallen-petal-floating river, from room to room upstairs across powder-spilled rugs next to unmade flesh-creased nesty beds and into the heavy stale fading warmth of closets, stepping around step-ins, picking up petticoats, turning off lights, surveying the extent both in space and time of his bondage, his holy bondage wholly his, not theirs, and when the upstairs, even the bathroom, where to turn off the water he had walked not barefoot on a floor of open screaming red-kissed cleansing-tissue mouths, was kindly totally dark, he came downstairs, step by

step deeper and louder into *Milneburg Joys*, not blues, and turned the corner and went down into the basement where the old records were stacked in their torn thin-paper doughnut-holed envelopes and the old player stood dusty-topped on the card table with the splintered wire-bound leg.

With the whole floor resonating, the music came from above, echoing muffled and a little blurred but not deadened, alive, loud, so that when he heard it mingle with the glassy delicate tinkle of the toilet running in the corner he remembered the place where how many count the years ago he had had to go around the bandstand, stumbling in the darkness cast by one unshaded lamp strung down from the ceiling on a twisted blackened cord, stumbling among the wire-legged tables, among the tipped bottles rolling on the floor, among the stamping feet, the voices then from the circling great-circling darkness crying as a part of the pulse of the beat of the music of the place with the drum-weight and the brass-cry of white boy white boy where are you going what you doing here again and again stumbling then as he got to the bandstand itself and swooped around it in a roar of music so great that the separate parts of it were lost and all that stayed and pounded was the blood itself thick behind his eyes until he banged the half-door into the acidy funky room behind the band where the water trickled and the music was thinned a little, its strength diluted coming through the wooden slat-grooved wall and then it was gone entirely in a rushing gushing sound of liquid and he was sick and suddenly light and free and freely walking out toward the unceasing sea of sound and from the door again as from a great height he heard the music clear and saw the room darkness floating far beneath him and saw the girl above him, obviously and most strangely above him who was already above her, and he could most clearly hear her voice and see each drop of darkly glistening sweat on her upper moving lip and between her moving breasts and as she reached out her writhing working twisting hands he began the slow endless circling dive into darkness.

And as if from that same darkness which had been transported

and had transported him and lay then in a still circling cloud surrounding his own bed he remembered his father looking down at him and saying, "So it's happened to you," and pausing a long time to say finally flatly, "Too." And then quietly, "I can smell it." And he remembered lying in his own darkness so far away and so weighed down by it, so smothered, so enclosed and locked away that he could not ask what, but the word, what, the question, lay roaring in his mind unasked, unsaid.

Banville set his empty second celebrating glass on the old player, jiggled the handle of the tinkling toilet, turned off the light over the round-bellied washing-machine and went up the stairs, pausing at the top to look back down as he turned that light switch too. He now had the top and bottom of the house darkened and dry and as he stood in the kitchen again pouring water into whiskey and then switching off the bright lights, leaving the pale yellow one over the sink to glow warm and unantiseptic, the player dumped a record and the piano began with its slow deliberately sexual trills delayed and broken and re-begun now up and now down with the bass steady and long-chorded, solidly sustaining the lazily exploring experimenting, the sleepily not resolving not resolving then almost then inevitably finally resolving right hand, and the voice began, low too and richly phlegmed with easy uncomplicated satisfactions. Banville made another drink, remembering, counting celebration's numbered glasses, not drinks, for the cold ones in the car had been extra-curricular and compulsive and non-scheduled, but glasses, one in sink, two on basement player, three here and now four in hand for the 219 took my baby away and he realized it was his own voice he heard and for a moment debated degree of drunkenness with himself, theorizing that number meant less in result than did quality or strength and that even content of glass, alcoholic content or proof, meant less than predisposition or mood and that any sudden airy elation, any lessening of the pressure of bonds, any slackening of moral fibre, indeed any conviction of innermost destiny and high calling, should be credited not to booze but to what a big boy am I and he immediately stopped

singing and let the player play piano while he replenished the drink with whisky from the bottle but added no water, therefore not counting it, but smelling it, inhaling the wood-smoke sourness, sipping it, savoring, slowly walking into the music parlor where he sat on his flung coat on the davenport and drank steadily until the glass was empty.

And as *Bugle Call Rag* came brightly into the room with its lightly irreverent introducing rag-timed call, he put the words to it, "And he STUCK it with his THUMB and he PULLED from it a PLUM and he SAID what a BRIGHT boy am I," AND on the long held-beyond-the-beat high second-position B-flat major chord startling after the last low introductory F-seven, he stood up and put on his coat again thinking this he had not heard as piano since he'd heard the pianos all up and down the dark street beyond the alley behind the house and, remembering, he went to the kitchen to pour himself an uncounted unmeasured drink, brimming it with tap-water while he mentally composed a note to himself, and then stood by the counter and on the back of a virgin shopping-list, disregarding four various kinds of toilet soap and three of tooth-paste, tried to put it down in one deathless penciled telegram-like phrase for the morning.

You mix it up with music and you're screwed. Or call it poetry if you like and you still are. For however much the music or the poetry is or is called or is believed to be an explanation, a symbol, an interpretation, or, most insidious of all, a heightening of experience, it nonetheless and in spite of critics takes on a life of its own and is in itself and by itself an experience. And when your experience and your heightened experience are two things, you've had it. You see double. You try to see one, you may think you see one, but you see double. And the seeing of the one is really only a joke, a kidding of the self, which disguises as appreciation or aesthetic experience this hysterical running from one to another of the double images, seeking one in the other, escaping one therefore in the other, losing both in time and therefore the more frantically seeking while running away as, yes, as you

Banville once sought while running away and up and down the dark screaming piano-tinkling streets in the hot night.

It's like moving that marvelous black carved and thus flower-bedecked upright piano into an uncarpeted living-room, no parlor that, the four niggers sweating and grunting it up across the creaking porch and past the screen door with the ripped bottom and then across the dust-sifting open-cracked wooden floor to that, no that, no over there not by the god damned rainy window, yes there along that wall, and letting it sit there, dusty, to peel and shed its gilded petals and to ping its strings, ignored except in moments, in nights of great stress, nights known to be stressful by the sounds of weeping in the bedroom, nights in which that soft sibilant sobbing would blend endlessly and on into sleep with the slowly rocking walking tenths of the bass and the trilled half-steps of the deep low weeping too blues that night when the sobbing changed to screaming and the screen door was ripped clean from the bottom hinge and hung crooked and gaping and the axe crashed into the keyboard and into the tendriled wooden vines and the sound was of splintering and then of feet running and he, Banville, yes now try to make a note of that, ran too after him but couldn't find him anywhere.

There he stood, trying, woolly-minded, the stubby kitchen pencil worn almost pointless in listing all the sanitary intimate needs of all the women of the house, pointlessly now listing nothing, he told himself, nothing, and he crumpled the shopping grocery drugstore hardware needs and all the nameless ones as well and threw them into the sink to soak, picked up his drink and went with it, following it as he held it carefully ahead of him, into the music-room-parlor, where the song was of a street that ran down a long slope to the river past all the houses, and there he took the telephone out of the cradle and gave a number.

"Hello," came the young female Minnesota nasal voice.

"Is Doc there?"

"I can't hear you."

"Is Doc there?"

"The doctor is at the Christmas program at the church. Is this an emergency?"

"What aint, sister, what aint?"

"I can't hear you I'm sorry. It's so noisy."

"Is Doc there?"

"The doctor is—"

"I know I know."

"I'm sorry I can't—"

"Me too," Banville said. And putting the phone down slowly he said, "Name me one who can. Just name me one." And he put on his overcoat, finished his drink, turned off the player, carefully pressing the reject button to drop the last unplayed record with an air-cushioned plop, and then again to bring the arm over and stop the turntable, and walked carefully to the kitchen, where he put his bottle into his pocket and pulled on his gloves.

Still it snowed. His cheeks feeling flushed and hot, his whole body urgent and warm, he stood on the little porch in the damp cold which enveloped him as completely and tactilly as a cold bath but as if cushioned by his own heat and so felt at a distance of one half inch beyond the ends of his rising reaching throbbing antenna-like nerves, and then he went to brush the snow from the windshield with two free finger-flapping swings of his left hand and got into the car to back out into the street. No belt squeaked and steering was easy, the car floating over the snow silently and softly and as he drove past all the lighted warm houses, unerringly making the turns, banking precisely, swooping lightly where no one had been before him, his left foot began tapping and he could hear the whole band in his mind, note for note, with the introduction two bars long, the clarinet stating at two spaced beats, two beats thumped and two beats still, and then the ringing unison, the trombone weighty and way low down, holding and carrying, cementing the whole, the whole of melodies twisted and turned, then unison trumpet and clarinet that break apart but go right on, singing and building until the solo, the great Dodds ride with the single A held for eight long

breathless bars like a delayed orgasm and then for four delayed again and finally the voice after one bright rim-shot singing, "Hello Central give me Doctor Jazz; he's got that I need I'll say he has," with the floor-boards of his car, with the drums and the guitar, the piano and the bass, all beating to the gay lament, "Oh when the world goes wrong and got those blues," and he was outside the town among the hills and with the snow suddenly stopped he was aware of light after dark, of a pervasive grey visibility unlike the solid black between street lamps back in town, as he looked back from a high open curve into the watery floating snow-light and the long valley with the one big black splotch made by the town trees hung with lights like holes punched in a window-shade and all the rest unlighted self-lighting forever-stretching snow, and then it was all gone as he swung back into the folding hills where the farm-house lights were yellow in windows reflecting blue cold on the snow among the black trees and when they too were gone behind there remained only the snow on the road between the dark high stone-strewn ravine sides where he drove echoing, blowing his horn now in time with his Hello Central stomping feet, everything easy, everything soaring, everything light and free and exciting as he turned into the drive, the only car so far, under the big lighted white and green sign Knollwood Manor, to slide his car to a stop in the virginal yard and track to the door remembering the music and say aloud, "Kunnel Banville to see Kunnel Abe Reisenbaum," as the peep-hole opened in the door and then as the door opened on laughter and, "Yes suh Mistuh Banville," it flared in him, all the words and all the music, "the more I get the more I want it seems," as he saw her sitting by the big black stove.

He hadn't seen her before but she looked as if she'd been here a long time, or long enough to be at home and in command of herself and of the place, or been somewhere, around, moving and being, long enough to be assured and easy and remote and calm. Banville wondered whether these words touched her at all, whether if he made notes he would ever find them, but he

knew she was why he had come out here stomping floorboards and yelling at sleeping farmhouses, she who he had not known would be here, and he thought of the old man saying "Dichter."

"You feeling good Mr. Banville," the doorman said.

"Pretty good. I felt worse earlier."

"Let me hang up your coat. Mr. Abe he's around here somewhere."

"There's a jug in the pocket," Banville said.

"You feeling good all right. You celebrating something?"

"The arrival of another heiress."

"Well well," the doorman said politely.

"Well yes. If you'd make me a drink with plain water."

Of the rooms here this was the one Banville liked and came to see and to sit in, the room with the closed dark closet before which the deputy sheriff had stumbled about clearing his throat and scratching his head, the room he had always liked particularly on nights without the crowds and the shouting, on church nights and lodge nights and golf-club nights, or early in the morning after everyone had left or late in the afternoons before anyone had come, when it contained the darkness and the warmth without the noise. In it was the feeling of bigness within bigness, of all the rooms around it and above it, even of the land outside sloping away to the roads and the fields, and the feeling too of crowds, of people, but crowds gone and tired, women sleepy. "It's like waking up in a warm bed having slept for a half hour after an exemplary copulation," he'd once told Abe. And of course Abe had nodded. Abe was a great nodder. And he'd also made some statement as if for publication about excitement and self-control but that had been long ago for now he was as excited as he could remember being, his pulse as fast, his head as high, and, when John the bartender doorman brought him the drink, as euphoric, all right as drunk. Banville thanked him, looking not at him but at her and at the room, the fireplace that smoked when the wind was in the east, the copper pots on the black wood-burning range which tonight had a fire in it winking orange through the draft-holes and roaring in the heat-dulled

smoke-pipe, at her sitting beside the stove on an old chair like a Windsor but with heavy wire not wood for uprights in the back, at her whom he had been watching since he'd come in without her moving her chin from her hand, without his having seen her flick an eyelid.

Then someone came up behind him and slapped him on the back with one of those open-handed noisy neck-slapping Rotarian slaps and Banville said, "Don't do that for *Christ's* sake," and turned around and said, "Oh it's you," and when he saw Abe's round Jewish face with its fat-sunk eyes and its flabby fleshy almost prehensile nose all lost in blinking sadness and saw the shoulders roundly raised and the arms hanging limply, elbows at side, hands palm out and forward, he said, "I'm sorry Abe. I didn't mean to name a heathen god to you. I didn't mean to yell. I didn't mean —"

"I know," Abe said nodding. "But you haven't been here for a long time."

"Nor the sheriff."

"So you're sore," Abe said.

"No more. But tell me the truth about —"

"You had your eye on it," Abe said. "I saw that."

"On her," Banville said. "Let's have a drink and I'll tell you what I was thinking."

"Not yet," Abe said. "Save thinking for later."

"You can get drunk any time now. Nobody's coming out tonight. Not Miss Hannah. Not the sheriff. Not the deputies. They're all listening to the angels sing. Those who believe that He was King and those who believe that He was School Board Chairman, all, all listen to their own angels, all angel programs being scheduled for this one night lest someone stray across the street and hear a siren song."

"You reminding me," Abe said. "You got a favor to ask ask it."

"I was only thinking about the closet, the closed, the dark."

"Your wife there too? At the angels? What was that about the angels?"

"John bring me another please," Banville said. He'd been standing in the middle of the room, warm, since he'd come in. Now he took Abe's arm and turned him and went to sit at a small table by the fireplace. "What I was thinking," he said. "A closet is a closed thing by definition. John!"

"Coming Mr. Banville."

"A closed dark place outside which a blundering bumbling deputy sheriff can stumble about like a television star, an entertainer, a character, a personality, a name indeed, without—"

"Mr. Banville," Abe said.

"You're interrupting a very complicated image," Banville said and drank from the new drink.

"I know you know I know why he didn't look inside," Abe said.

"In the manner of a top comic who is not called a comedian but an adjective because he's only a small part of a formula he would pass the closed closet, even put the hand on the knob and make a remark about complaints having been received, the other hand scratching to indicate formalized puzzlement, and go on searching noisily and visibly but ignoring the closed darkness—"

"Mr. Banville," Abe said. "You want me to tell *you* why he didn't open?"

"So it is with her. This is what I was thinking. A closed place ignored in calculated ignorance because what has been so long not approved becomes in time not feelable and not seeable, because we all bumble around like bought deputies pretending, and because I too am a fraud and fear reality except in moments of —"

"Mr. Banville."

"Look once," Banville said. "If only to see the color. I can remember buckwheat honey. Dark yes but with a surface gloss which extends back into the depths of it as far as you can see, as far as you can force yourself to see, so the whole is a dark shine, a solid deep light which —"

As he looked she turned, her shadowed eyes opening as a cat's from sleep, slowly but to complete seeing, unamazed at what

they had seen dreaming closed, yellow-brown and tilted up a little at the outer corners under the rising brows, liquidly brown beneath the reflecting red of the moving fire.

"Warmth is the thing," Banville said. "Allow me to analyze."

"You drive out here alone, Mr. Banville?"

"Abe I flew," he said. "Drawn to warmth. So drawn because. Because," he said and stopped, looking into the eyes which were still turned toward him. "The windows of the," he began again and then stopped again, thinking no not of that but rather of windows reflecting a sunset and screening thus a dark room in which a calm observer sat with a notebook and a pair of binoculars watching him.

"Look Mr. Banville," Abe said. "I would leave her alone."

"You would."

"You can do yourself a lot of harm. Already you have. You could be a rich man like that lawyer Lawler."

"John," Banville said.

"But no," Abe said. "You run around scaring sheriffs and county lawyers. You come here tonight with your mind going in one direction —"

"In two," Banville said.

"—and you're like a locomotive rolling downhill no brakes and nobody to stop it."

"Nobody," Banville said.

"But me," Abe said. "I'll help. How many clients did it cost you that time?"

Banville had been watching her again. Without looking away from her, he said, "It isn't the clients. It wasn't. It was because I'd heard you were going to be closed that I telephoned the O'Flanahans in office and told them calmly that the minute they tried. And of course they cried complaints and depositions and I said the minute they made their move I'd make mine. It was very dramatic like a top soap opera and me a private top operetta. Get it?"

"No," Abe said sorrowfully.

"You need a drink. You going to save me rolling you need a

drink. And I must say it's wonderful having someone looking after me not with shopping lists and not with hag-rag philosophy can this marriage be saved. Can this rotting fish be saved? Of course it can. Simply wrap in our all-purpose wrap and fold like this with two fingers of each hand and a big smile and put it and its stink and its shining pustulant skin into your decorator-colored eighty-six-foot ranch-type freezer and it's yours forever. Saved and sorry. You don't think operetta's a good pun?"

"I think I will have the drink," Abe said.

"Good. And some music," Banville said. "John."

And it came to pass that Abe too drank and that from the whirling bubbling red and green shining jukebox, which for a pittance would play any or all of one hundred selections all different but on which one bank of records was reserved for Banville and Abe himself and his helper John and now for her too, came the music.

"I'm learning," Abe said. "*My Bucket's Got a Hole In It.*"

"Another title is *Keep A'Knockin' but You Can't Come In.*"

"You were telling me about the sheriff," Abe said. "That's very cute. That title."

"It's a traditional. He kept telling what the citizens were entitled to from his office and I interrupted him."

"How did you know he was coming?"

"In a town like ours you can smell things."

"You said that. About the fish." Abe was still on his first drink.

"I could see him in my mind's eye as we eyeless mindless ones are likely to say. In his office where I'd been. In his swivel chair with its busted cardboard imitation leather bottom with even the buttons and upholstery stitches pressed into it pressing its pattern into his pudgy posterior. By his desk, the great roll-top, the top rolled down and locked over the locked drawers, secret within secret heart, the heart pictured on the wall bleeding great drops and thorny-vine-encircled and watched carefully and calculatingly by the brewer's nude on the opposite wall. And I could in this same eye see him."

"The O'Flanahan."

"The O'Law and the O'Order."

"The Son O'Bitch."

"O'Good," Banville said. "O'John," he said louder. "Let's have a couple more O'Drinks. For my O'Pal and my O'Self."

"We got two," Abe said.

"I got to tell you. You want to know how he looked in this same eye I saw him in? Stop me and I'll tell you. Bald but hairy. The top of the head streaked with a few long brushed strands and dusted with a sparse fuzz, black, to make the pale sweaty baldness the more fish-belly white. Shaved but hairy. A few strays razor-missed in the deep chin-cleft. The head as if released after crushing in a vise, ears almost hidden among swollen mastoids, eyes feral and cold below protruding frontals and sunk in puffy sinuses. And the smile which I could hear, a snickering through the nose, teeth bitten together and the upper lip drawn down as if to hide them. To him I said it, quietly and with calm control as if I'd just taken off my heavy-framed glasses and put on my cloak of light and power. As soon as he made his move so too would I make mine, match lunatic with lunatic, call all lunatics available to make complaints and depositions about the O'Flanahan cousins and their beer-joints and about the stag parties at the Legion and about the sales convention of the MacDowell Refrigerator Company and about the O'Flanahan cousins' fifteen-year-old barmaids. And I hung up. Not that I, a sinner and a drunkard and a writer and defender of the unfaithful and therefore quadruply suspect. Not that I gave a damn. But only that I thought it only fair. So you were only raided formally and only formally released with no only formal charges and no only closet opened and everyone was only happy, even the O'Flanahans who will be re-elected as the state's only family of Mann-Act-violating sheriffs and deputies and county lawyers and commissioners."

"For me," Abe said, sadly smiling.

"For me. As a part of a necessary function performed by no one else in this community."

"No one?"

"That's sane and has an office with his name on the door."

Abe said, "Mr. Banville, that sounds very proud and even conceited. But I allow it. I agree."

"Because you look after me. Only for that did I do it."

"How many drinks you had tonight?"

"So keep caring."

"You were sore once. Once is enough."

For a moment neither spoke. It was quiet in the room. The fire popped a spark out onto the floor. John was in his closet bar, in the dry warmth, half asleep leaning on his flipped-down counter. And she, she had not moved. Eyes closed again, chin forward and pulled forward in her cupped hands, she sat away from the back of the chair, her spine straight, erect in repose, her breasts solid and aggressively toughly nipped under the sweater.

"When I was a kid," Banville began.

"You said about that."

"You going to let me *talk*," Banville yelled. He came forward too now in his chair with his back as if he were going to stand up, his hands on the edge of the table and his arms away from his sides with the elbows up and bent as if to lift himself away. "John for God's sake. Where's that drink? And don't stand there waiting for Abe the watcher to give you the nod. You trying to save me too?" He looked at Abe with all this and smiled at him when his voice was at the loudest.

And Abe said, "That won't work," to Banville and to John, nodding, he said, "Bring me one too then."

"My old man," Banville said quietly as he saw her turn toward him. Then he said, "This needs no speech, no literature, no heightening." They were looking at each other. She had turned in the chair and put her left arm over the back of it and stretched her legs ahead of her, straight, parallel, and slid down a little in the chair so she looked half reclining and stretching and about to yawn, and suddenly Banville stood up, shoving his chair screeching back with the backs of his knees, looking not where he was but across the room.

"Remember," Abe said. "The control."

But it was gone. Swaying, banging one of the glasses over, he stood there, finally erect, and then leaned again as if trying to hide that he had to lean, touching the table not with hand or body bulk but pushing against it sidewise with his leg very stiffly held, the muscles taut almost trembling. He stared and stood, as the empty glass rolled rocking slowing on the table top and the whisky dripped softly richly through a crack to the puddle on the floor.

"Remember," Abe said almost absent-mindedly as if to a dog pawing at his knee, and then, quietly, "For some reason you didn't want to tell me about your family but you did tell John perhaps because of his color and John told me so I of course want to congratulate you and inquire about your wife whom you'll remember you've allowed on occasion to visit us here and whom we all find to be a very charming lady although perhaps a bit down-trodden. And inquire too about your daughters whom I of course have never seen but of whom I've heard only good reports, of their charm, their youth, their brightness, their gaiety."

Banville didn't turn.

"I think you can hear me," Abe said.

And Banville heard as from a distance, but he could not listen or answer, for he was with immense effort measuring the distance from where he stood to the stove and the chair and with the effort came a kind of clarity and he focused on the gaunt hungry sunken-eyed face which was turned still to him and across which he could see it moving now the way the sun moves reflecting in a small separate cloud of feathery ripples across a windless lake and he saw her nod and slowly shut and open her eyes and then stand up and disappear around the corner into the pantry.

And when Banville started away from the table, carefully, putting his hand down in the whisky and then lifting it tentatively before taking one step, Abe stood too and took his arm as if to turn him back. Banville did not turn but aloud he said,

"Alone", and swung his arm, not looking where, not looking back, swung it back and away, the held elbow crooked and rising, the forearm clubbing the axe-like hand so that Abe, the sudden shifting weight solid against his chest, off balance, sat down again and simply watched him walk away, across the room, around the stove, not now tentative but easy and straight, narrowly held in as if balancing carefully but not slowly into the pantry where the back stairs went up winding dark.

So in the fullness and great emptiness of time he sat alone but with Abe driving, the storm noises not stormy but like the fine crepe-paper rustlings of coat-hanger wings on this a great day of great feast when we all seek the light, eternal or red let it be so it be light, knowing it will be, has to be, there, for the true seeker, but seeing not the sought light, seeing only the car lights reflecting on the snow again thickly heavily falling, seeing the road before them, which, with no mounds or depressions to mark the way he had come, was once more trackless and virgin. Yes, he was thinking putting his head back to rest, closing his eyes, trackless and ever new, with a million clichés fresh from the consciousness of the race to cover it, to cover it even as the snow, to say you can't go home again because there's no road back but only onward and upward and inward and the wings you buy for your children even unto the umteenth generation will not carry you even the length of a needle's eye along this lonely road unless someone crawls into the front seat, someone looking angry like a father pulling a kid out of a dark hole he's been told to stay out of, the righteous rescuer, the mighty motemover, pulling pulling and telling him how he got stuck or might have got stuck. Forever.

At the Manor? Ask.

And be called a joker who thinks a joke's a joke when there's nothing more serious. Than a joke.

Unstuck. With a driver saviour. As always.

Without opening his eyes he fingered his hand out across the seat between them searching the bottle and finding it, cold, and

palming then the neck of it holding it erect on one knee feeling with the other hand the cold body of it and hearing or remembering a voice saying so sit on it warm it hatch it out. Bitterly.

Watchman, what of the light?

He didn't open his eyes. And had he asked? What of the what of the? The head still back on the back of the seat, the big head, ask anybody, the big head that was now throbbing like the pulse of the. Yes yes. These truths. All of them. This one now being the truth that the more you drink the more you are the same, big-headed, balloon like to bust, like to dusky bust. Big-head sore. Sore like a balloon. About?

He had seen the light when he saw the lights, driving out, coming out on the always virgin road when the snow had stopped so he could see the whole valley and all the lights in it. The town. And the steeple. And all the people. All the sick and the dead. The valley one wide cold snowy grave from hills to powerful hills full of these bodies awaiting patiently the final trumpeting of. The light? The glare so bright, so hot that the protecting bushel is burned away? Listen in tomorrow. Watchman tell, will tell, tomorrow. Is this truth true?

So joke. It was Abe's voice. So all right be a joker. You were a mass tonight.

No. Deny. I deny my mass-right. An island I. Engulfed. Sink-alone under. Inutile. Unable.

Then slowly he began to rise.

Out. You want out.

I couldn't make out. I couldn't get out. So tell me what of the light, Father Abraham.

And Father Abraham, wheel-hunched, road-eyed, taut, angry, mentioned father again. You were telling about your old man. Denigration?

So I was.

You ran away a kid from homes.

So I did. As now from the lights while seeking the light. Father watchman what of the?

You also talked arms off and the sheriff.

Arms and the. So I did. I have looked upon the wine and learned I'm a beer-drinker. By heart. For a loser can not change his spots. The light. What of it?

So a little piece of the dark on the side is as nothing in anyone's sight?

Father Abraham, hear. Banville is different. Banville was thinking. Banville has two heads. Banville couldn't cut the dusky.

So joke god damn it joke. The floor-board is loose.

Joke it's loose at the top only. Thinking of Abe sitting hunched looking only at the road and talking hesitatingly carefully, carefully angry, still the rescuer, jokingly stamping the foot on the doctor jazz board and suddenly it was all there in the car singing she's got what I need I'll say she has.

You're in a rut.

Rutting in the song. But the tune and the beat. The drum. The real thing is to listen to the drum, the song. If you can't march you can sing.

What's the name of that drummer again?

Watch the light.

Banville took a drink. Another. Another? You ask me your question and I'll ask you mine.

He turned his head to look at Abe who was watching only the road ahead. One more swallow doesn't make a sober but at one pregnant peculiar position of the pendulum it helps. It does. Sober? Not as a judge for who am I to? He held himself carefully and stopped his whirling mind; his eyes he slowly carefully focused on Abe again. "Jesus Christ," Banville said aloud. "No wonder a musician mows grass rather than play to people who won't listen." He could see Abe clearly now.

"What's that?"

"Turn that god damn radio off," Banville said.

"Okay. Don't get sore. You been sore enough enough times."

"I'm not sore."

"You were asleep."

"I guess so. For a while. Off and on?"

"Talking in your sleep," Abe said.

"Don't tell me what I said." After a few minutes of quiet that was not silence but a cushioned ease of movement with the sounds the movement made coming swathed and wrapped in a distance that was of the mind of course but great nevertheless and untraversable, he said. "The hospital's closed, for Christ's sake. We can't get in. Forget it."

Abe turned from the ahead to look sidewise one moment at him. "You're talking different all of a sudden," he said.

"I'm sober now," Banville said. "End quote of Pinetop."

"We'll get in."

"We?"

"Sure we," Abe said. "All they do is hang up a sign about hours. They never lock the doors. It's like O'Flanahan's church. When you need it you'll find it."

"I've changed my mind," Banville said. "I'm going to change your name to Norman Vincent Reisenbaum."

Abe said nothing.

"We'll go someplace and get drunk again."

Abe didn't argue. He kept driving.

"Abe."

"We'll go," he said. "I get you in there you'll be all right. I know the girls. The nurses. They've been out to the place."

"I should. I ought to. A dream is a—"

"You don't need to go anyplace to get drunk, Mr. Banville," Abe said the way a tailor would say he didn't need the shoulders fitted again.

"You see the lights yet?"

"Lift up your head," Abe said.

"Remember the mind's eye," Banville said. "In it I can see. I will lift up my head when we're out of the hills. And the woods."

"We'll just walk in," Abe said.

Banville with his head on the back of the seat was rested. Suddenly. He was sleepy and tired but he was rested too. Or better word. Relaxed? Exhausted, say. As in resources or balloon or flat tire.

"You think too much," Abe said.

Perhaps coming away, Banville was thinking, not thinking, no, but floating on the mind. You float too much Oh mind of ivory tower kind of pure. All right now, begin again. He drank from the bottle. Perhaps coming away, he thought, in spite of Abe's advice, was better than entering the big warm room. Reverse the yearning for the dark room. Be free of Freud. *Freude frie*. A drum is a silence is a. Blank. Verse. Again. So Banville drank from the bottle, sobering drinking.

"Everybody thinks," Banville said. "Everybody's in a rut. A rut is a thought is a dream is a rut."

"You had a dreamy look tonight," Abe said.

"That's two jokes for you," Banville said. Then he said, "Even to smash it with an axe is to have it. The smashing of a dream is in itself a dream."

"Yeah," Abe said.

"All right then. *You* say it. Why should I be sad because I couldn't. After all the build-up, I couldn't."

"You were drunk," Abe said.

"And why now should I want what only a few hours ago were as chains and fetters and, wanting them, be afraid to go back to them?" Banville said slowly. His eyes were open and focusing. He could see Abe clearly enough but the peripheral vision was not yet normal. There was a certain framing of the clear center by a whirling as above a hot pavement on a hilltop when you come on it from below. "Lights yet?" he asked. "Guide and mentor, do you see the heavenly sign, the star, the heavenly business-managed tax-paying star in the street, the light of our—"

"You feeling pretty good?"

"Pretty," Banville said. "The die is finally cast."

"You're running off at the mouth enough to be feeling pretty good. You make part sense which is better than the no sense you made a while back."

"When you see the light we'll have a drink. Another."

"Now," Abe said.

And ahead of them, ahead of the flashing winking twinkling snow, lay the street lights, now one, now another, coming out of darkness into dimness into brilliance gone, and Banville sat erect to see, to watch, to drink, to pass the bottle. And on they drove, the windshield reflecting the street lights and the colors. The wipers were almost stalled. All the way from the Manor the trembling blades had sluggishly slowly shoved the wet snow into lumpy packs, up and down, against which now, ever more slowly, irregularly snapping and stalling, sighing, sucking, they bumped and hesitated, pausing before turning to trail tentatively light-tinted streaks of wetness across the glass again.

"What time is it?"

"I don't know."

They passed the bottle. Both drank. It was snowing hard. In the narrow streets away from the center of town the sidewalks, the lawns, the gutters, were all at one smooth swept level of snow. The street lights at the corners swarmed silently and savagely with snow. And coming out from among the trees and houses they found the wind was beginning to blow here on the high flat plain where the hospital stood. The drifts were finger-ing out across the new-plowed road, tapering cones of white pointing out from the piled ridges along the sides. The car bumped across them like a power-boat in a small sea, thumping each drift, splashing the snow hissing up under the floor and the mudguards. The wind was growing and cooling, drying the snow, sanding it loose from the fields and blowing it sibilantly across the night.

"Stuck at *your* place," Banville said. "I remember your saying that."

"We'll make it easy," Abe said.

"Back too?"

"Have another drink," Abe said. "Relax."

"It's almost gone."

"You have it."

Banville capped the bottle as they circled the dead snow-piled canna bed by the front door, cutting down and then across and

back into the wind, the snow-angles changing swiftly, and stopped by the curb already since shoveling beginning to fill again. Abe shut off the engine and they heard the wind and the dry rustling slap of the big frozen leaves.

"So," Abe said.

"You come," Banville said.

"But yes," Abe said. And he got out of the car and came around through the howling snow to open the door on Banville's side. He stood there like a doorman holding it open, half bowing, sweeping his left hand away palm up. "You couldn't do this without me to help," he said. "So I help. A tat for a tit," he said bowing deeper.

Banville got out. They opened the tall transparent plastic doors and entered to stand in the gassy warmth looking out at the storm. Electric fans whirled, water trickled through curved pipes, air sucked into grilled louvred openings in the wall. Faintly breathing bellows slowly opened and hissed closed, sighing softly. The light here was yellow, soft, with a red warmth, a warm behind-eyelid red floating in it without mingling, like a red fog drifting to the slow suspiring of the unseen bellows, so it was not orange light but yellow and red super-imposed, each visible, each individual, each independent but each carried floating in the other.

"What's the color of the light?" Banville asked.

"Orange," Abe said.

"Of course," Banville said in answer and he looked at his feet where puddles of melted snow darkened the dusty-textured tan concrete floor.

"What kind of a question is that?" Abe asked him. And when Banville looked at him, trying to answer, Abe shrugged his shoulders and lifted his eyebrows and said, "Never mind. Say it's purple."

"Come on," Banville said. "If anyone stops us, say we just saw the light and were curious."

"I told you," Abe said. "Stop worrying. Number me the room."

"Drink?" In his pocket Banville had the bottle, tilting the neck of it toward Abe, opening the pocket so.

"I thought it was gone."

"I saved it," Banville said and brought it out and handed it to Abe, who wiped its mouth with the palm of his hand, tilted it to drink, held it aloft and angled against the light to see how much was left, passed it back to Banville who also wiped its mouth and tilted it, he emptying it, bottle skyward bottoming, and then together the two stood, each with his hand on the dead soldier's empty dream, and placed it precisely in the center of the lobby floor where they bowed their heads over it observing the light striking it from six points and going through it, refracted, prised, intensified in the six shadows to make a double star of brightness in the star of shadow on the floor. And then, not speaking, they went away and left it there.

Through the inner doors they went, past the desk with the charts on it snowy brilliant under the darkly shaded lamp, past the empty chair.

"Coffee-drinker," Banville said.

They bowed to the light.

"Number?" Abe asked.

"Follow me, guide and mentor," Banville said.

And they went down the long corridor with the lights above the doors flashing on and off, Banville first, Abe following, their footsteps soggy on the rubbery floor, and turned off into a branching corridor to stop outside the room.

"A private?" Abe asked.

"Nothing but the best. We got the insurance. Pays one tenth of one percent of all expenses in return for a mortgage on the house and a garnishment on future earnings even unto the tenth generation."

"A bargain," Abe said. "You can save that way."

"Unless of course history shows your grandfather died before reaching age one hundred. In which case there is a slight increase in premium and you pay the salary of the vice-president in charge of radio advertising, whichever is less."

"Whichever is fair. Only fair."

"Just fair," Banville said. "The company hopes to do better some day. Fair better."

And they both pretended that was funny, laughing silently, respecting the sacred surroundings, their fingers across their mouths in the school gesture, bowing toward each end of the corridor in turn and toward each other.

Then, "Sober up," Abe said.

"Triple play. No seven ages for us," Banville said. "Just three. Sadness to Silliness to Sobriety."

"Sad you were," Abe said. "Really sad."

Banville looked up at the number of the room.

"I'll stand guard," Abe said.

"Not silly?" Banville asked him. "Wasn't I silly enough? And don't just shrug."

Abe shrugged.

"I said."

"The customer is always right," Abe said.

"I rejected your advice."

"You'd have done the same for anyone."

"And then my conscience. Conscience doth make eunuchs of us all."

"Sure sure."

"The spirit of the time," Banville said. "Punk booze for spirit. The face of the clock hidden for time. Impotence as final commentary. All of it a reduction of platitude to particular."

"Go on in," Abe said. "While you're talking feeling good."

"I'm stalling."

"Quit."

"And you'd do this for anyone too," Banville said. "Prod and push and arrange and dictate and psychoanalyze and hear confession and set penance."

"Quit," Abe said.

"Wouldn't you?"

"No."

Scrunchy footsteps as of someone walking in water-soaked

shoes sounded in the long corridor. Abe turned to look as Banville watched him and when he turned back with a look of false alarm on his face Banville went into the room.

He closed the door, leaning back on it, his hands behind him on the knob. It was dark here with a darkness that floated on a floor of faint light from a small bulb low in the wall behind the high metal bed. She was asleep, on her side, her face away from him, her hair in braids pigtailed out on the pillow. The darkness diminished as he watched. He could almost feel his pupils dilate. Soon he could see the part in her hair, sharp, clean, straight down the back of her head making a line with the soft groove in the nape of her neck so that even though it was curved on the pillow, even though she was lying sleeping, she had the look of erectness and resiliency she'd held since first he saw her, which she'd brought to him out of the life she'd had before he saw her.

She turned onto her back and opened her eyes and said, "Cajun Cajun I'm so glad," and lying thus with the dim reflecting light magnifying itself in the loosened hair above her forehead, she reached out both hands, backs up, fingers loosely curved, the covers off her arms which were bare now in her own short-sleeved gown. "You're tired," she said.

"All ye who weary," Banville said. He sat by her on the bed, awkwardly high from the floor. She took his hands in hers. Her eyes, deeply dim, were looking at something beyond him and above, as if unable to focus closer.

"Above the purity of disinfectant," she said, "you reek."

"How do you feel?"

"Fine. I'm resting. You should rest."

"I didn't."

"Because of what I said earlier?"

"I forgot what you said."

"You're a liar," she said. "A drunken liar."

"That's my business," he said. "My trade." He kissed her on the forehead.

"I'm glad you came," she said.

"In the middle of the night to wake you up."

"It doesn't matter when I sleep," she said. She looked at him now as she spoke and then, as if satisfied with what she saw, she let his hands go slowly and, sighing, not sadly but restfully, exhausted maybe he was remembering, she put her hands behind her head and wriggled down a little off the pillow, elbows and arms winged out on either side of her bloneness, her eyes closing again, and she said, "You should too but you don't."

The light here was as strange as the colored light out there against the storm, that light of two colors beating against the tall glass and held back hissing inside, one color here, yellow faint, but as if sourceless perhaps because now he was sitting on the bed which covered the source, less like light than like a liquid slowly filling the dark impervious tank of the room and giving all it covered a faint light-emitting quality so he could in the near dark see even her eyelashes, long, sweeping, now down and resting on the faint curve of shadowed fatigue below her eyes.

"Don't what?" he asked suddenly.

"Rest."

"I'm demon-driven," he said.

"Demon," she said the way she'd have said it to one of the girls reporting a demon-sighting in the clothes-hamper.

"It's a word for laziness and common orneriness maybe," he said. "Call all itchings with magnifying names like furies and demons. Call inhibitions and cringing fears by names like conscience and doom. Say we're on a crusade when we throw stones through neighbours' windows and squirt garden hoses on their fires. Say we're poets when we sit up through the night trying to convince ourselves there's point in what we'll be too tired to tend to next day. We love the word and the word is a womb. Getting drunk is striking a blow for liberty. Throwing fire-crackers under cops is—"

She interrupted. "You're not sober yet. What time is it?"

"I don't know."

"And how did you get in?"

"Walked. The Gorgon of the Watch was off drinking coffee."

"Now go home," she said. "Get some rest. Get your sleep out. Make the girls make breakfast for you. It's vacation."

"All that," he said.

"Go home and rest."

"Abe brought me," he said as if asking her to react.

She shook her head slowly no. "Maybe he drove the car," she said. "You mean Abe from the Manor?"

"He wanted to see you."

She smiled.

"He knows the guardian angels here," Banville said.

"I'd like to thank him for driving," she said. "He can see me when I do that."

"You don't have to."

"I want to."

"To berate me or to demean yourself?"

"Neither," she said. "I want to say hello. The doctor said I could have visitors. It's part of my rest. I please to have him in."

He went to open the door. Abe was leaning against the opposite wall talking to a nurse. He had his feet crossed, the one solidly planted supporting his weight, the other toed down and heeled up. His arms were crossed on his chest, holding his unbuttoned overcoat opened. He was looking sadly along his nose at the nurse, who was red-haired with a broad-backed figure of indeterminate age and utility.

Banville beckoned.

Abe bowed to the nurse and said, "Excuse me and thank you for your kindness," and came across into the room.

Banville nodded at the nurse, whom he did not know, and closed the door again.

Abe said, "The signs say visiting from two to four. There is some confusion between ack emma and pip emma. It not yet being four we may stay until then or until the situation is clarified by higher authority. That's RAF talk."

Irene said, "I wanted you to know I was grateful for your

taking care of my wandering husband in the storm. He gets lost sometimes."

"He wasn't really lost," Abe said. "I enjoy seeing him. He's done a lot for me. He's a—" he tried to say and stopped.

"Was she pretty?" Irene asked.

And Banville said, "Like a dream. Like a dream I've had. I don't know."

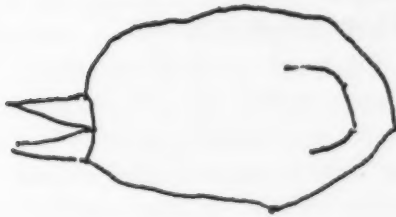
Her hands were out again and he took them.

"Finally he's awake," Abe said.

"You sententious bastard," Banville said.

"What's that?" Abe asked. "What kind?"

But no one answered him. Even on the way back to the house Banville was silent. It was not until they sat, Banville and Abe, on the davenport with a final drink, waiting for Abe's taxi to arrive, when Abe saw the new player and asked to hear it, that Banville spoke, and then he said no, not now, the noise would wake the kids, who would be tired after their tours of duty as angels, whom, as they sat silent again, they could hear now and then turning in their beds upstairs.



• TRACY THOMPSON

SPRING

A land below a fall, a wind above;
Rice-rations, for what marriage you
are doled?
I would not all were dirge this day,
This day of Spring, in a backward year.
But we have come to the edge of feelings,
To the rim and border of our moods,
We'd raise the land a notch, the wind
we'd have
Howling a deeper lamentation of delight.
Which means, this marriage here we sanctify.
So let these shouts be turned about,
Spring is a time of blossom, festival,
but why
The gulls are lonely
Only the gulls could say.
They come from that deep region of the sea,
But they "know only surfaces," you'll say;
But I say, "No they've followed boats
until they dropped,
And for no more than rice."

IN A FORMER AGE

In my seamless garment,
 A former woodchopper whose axe is now too dull
 And for which I've substituted this pen
 In order to write to you
 A little of my former doings
 Would only bore like all atrocities
 Your finer sensibilities, how like a monk dedicate
 In the Black Order I performed my duties
 With the lumberjacks, and often over the weekends
 Got drunk, and beat my wife, deprived my children,
 Which, in our small town, are atrocities enough.
 In a former age I would have been a monster,
 Condottieri, paid assassin maybe, Luke the Blade,
 A headsman (maybe), something like a babe manqué;
 Knowing a little history, of such things also I know,
 I used to read about those ages, Italian renaissance
 And dream that maybe . . . they could be revived?
 I'm not that silly, even so I'd dream a bit,
 Ponder a little, scheme a mite, procrastinate.
 I remember Balzac in his robes, in prison,
 Where he wrote his greatest works, some were debtors,
 Villon was a thief. How tame we moderns are!
 Except the . . . never mind, you know who I mean;
 They are the weanedaway from all the virtues,
 The moral ignorant. So with my pen I write
 A kind of memoire, drawn from experiences
 And observations, sketches of life I've seen
 In the lumbertowns, the bordertowns, the cities.
 In my seamless garment, a little of my former doings.

• WILLIAM S. HILLMAN

VARIATION 1

Your feet are full of grass, wait. When the letter
came, I put it on the table
under the two glass birds; one
must have caught the sun like a lens
and burned your name—look. I'm glad you came early—
ever since morning, each time the furnace starts
the water whines in the pipes and the lights flicker.

Use this, your feet are full of grass.
And hold these flowers, or fill the jug with water;
I kept only the ivory ones, and let your brother
take two stalks of the blue. When he hurried in
with that book of his, and the leather flaking off it, I was
angry
at first. Have you read it? He must be very tired.
Here, hold them with both hands.

VARIATION 2

When you came towards the house, did you see
him close the window, and his shadow on it?

No, but the way you ask now
seems unfamiliar stairs, and sun
through dust at out twinned hands.

Forget it;
that matchflame heat winks up at anything,
stares like an ashy eye
by the side of the bed, in the room across the hall.
My voice lies, listen to what I say.

Alright: how is he?

As well as expected.

Only, for instance, in this heavy summer

WILLIAM S. HILLMANN

his knees slacken, hands lie tired and quiver
a little, like a dog dreaming.

He has to have the fire even in August,
and walls and sheets get coated with the smell—
perhaps he's curing himself like an old haunch.

How can you say that and still stay here
like a little girl, 'Natalya-go-to-your-father'?
You used to watch the sundial hours and hours
and after dark, with your hands against the screen,
still watch, as the white moths clustered in.

I can.

VARIATION 3

But these are sunshine ghosts.
Wait at the rocky edge,
looking southeast: you will see,
when worm and haunting fly hide from the dry light,
the children in the grass,
the children sleep together in the grass.

VARIATION 4

Look at her running again with her arms full
and that dress with a stain like wine where she fell, carrying
blackberries.

She tore it, too, on the briars, the thorns pricked her face.
Perhaps I should keep her
at home more, busy, at floors and windows,
books and a chair.

• DAVID CORNEL DE JONG

FRATERNITY

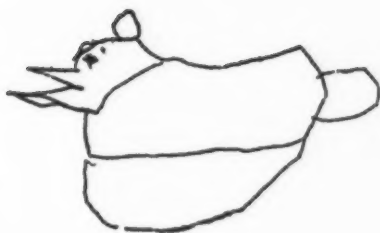
Here is my brother
from Kansas, a remote
brother who lacking
the wisdom to be my
brother has tried
slashing his wrists,
hanging himself by
a Christmas tie, walking
through a cage of bears,
yet lives to make
of me a less than
sanguine star to which
his bloody wagon
is hitched.

We are having
a beer together, we
sit tilted together
at a bar and have
analysed the barmaid's
public charms and
we have remembered
dead parents with
data and compunctions.

There happens no
further goal, there is
no other place to go,
there are no fuller
words to say, no less
than bloody love to provide.

We shove coins roundabout
in moist lakes on the bar.
He says "Well now" and I
answer "There then," and
at the same moment we stare
at a sign which says:
Love Thy Neighbor.

And we float off on neighborly
loves, each on a punitive barge
of exactions, drifting down and
away where only causes are,
along shorelines where familiar
incalculables spell out a credo
braided by father and mother,
while God always nods kindly
from his grandfather clock.



• THOMAS WILLIAMS

ANOTHER VARIATION ON THAT THEME

(For D.J., with great respect)

I see her waking from a different dream,
Surprised by darkness in soft Eden's vale.
She has been told what's female and what's male —
It is enough to make the woman scream.
She digs that sublapsarian rag: a stream
Of sweet indignities. She will prevail;
A fig for all that hangs upon a tale!
But horn-rimmed Adam's found himself a theme,
And there he cogitates, "A b b a,"
As sonnet formulates upon the page
And Eve premeditates upon the lamb.
She hears the gates groan open. "Seize the day!"
She cries dishevelled, in a lovely rage.
He coolly says, "I think, therefor iamb."

NOUNS AND VERBS

My relative the farmer doesn't laugh
As do the Bushmen at the quick
Familiar jerks and quiverings of pain,
Yet he is not so gentle with his hands
As I have heard the Bushmen are,
Who have a name for each bright ruff
And fold of tripas, vein and flesh.
They have more nouns than we, but half the verbs,
And yet they call to everything, "Oh, meat!"
From antelope to flying ant,
And what they name they eat.

My relative the farmer can't but stare
Into the axed hen's fear-bright eye,
Whose body waltzes off alone.
The fool dreams with his axe in hand,
And then he drives it in the block
Again, this time beheading . . . what?
I guess there must be men to murder hens
If we will have our meat;
Too bad we have so many dreamy verbs
For what we have to do to eat.

• MARTIN HALPERN

TRISTANO ED ISOTTA

(After a splendid performance of the opera at the *Maggio.. Musicale* in Florence)

Damning *Il Wagner* for an egotistic
Teutonic barbarian of a proto-Fascist
And Decadent Romanticism's brashest
Pretender, *Dottore di Arno, Umanista*,
Consented, out of good manners, to immolate
Ear, eye, and intellect in that absurd,
Pretentious travesty of the Cornish lord
And Irish virgin potioned out of hate
To superhuman ardor. When his will
Succumbed, drugged into reverence for five
Bound hours, he blamed it on music's privative
Perils, and damned all music for his fall.

Ma, good *Dottore*, what is to be done?
Bewitched you were, through all your stout defenses?
When all one's principles abhor one's senses
Adore, does one's soul cease to be one's own?

Mah! It's no common potion *this* wizard brews.
How subtly the ceaseless modulations break
The will's resistance — whet but will not slake
Its thirst for tonic recourse and repose,
Till, weak with want, it yields its hard-held ethos.
No amenities here; no simple, clean refrain
To garner for the whistling; no humane
Italian high-jinks or domestic pathos:
Only such qualmless hastelessness as gods
Or the hubristic vaunt their power by —
From the first 'cello leap through that slow cry
Which lifts the fat, gauche singers from what clods

They may be, to knight and princess of our lulled
Credulities, patrons of our unsurer
Troths; to that final resolved *appoggiatura*,
In whose calm every woman is Iseult,
And, adolescent fantasies unshammed,
All men are Tristan, no one need be Mark,
Love is death, death love, that is all our dark
Wills know, and with *Il Wagner* we are damned.

WITH A CAMERA IN TAORMINA

Cypress in front of flowering almond tree
Before a silhouette of Etna,
Against the well-proved threat
Paired as a bulwark; then, vistas of sea
Beyond both sloping corners;
And over all, this winter morning
Brighter than northern Junes: thus it must be.

The lower, pink-round almond has to stand
Close in yet clear behind the cypress,
Boughs fringing either side,
Bride to its upright, evergreen command.
So matched, and centered, they
Would seem to outface the volcano,
And set rapport between the sea and land.

But I have looked all morning, up and down
The open heights of Taormina,
And failed to find that scene,
Though all its parts show amply through the town.
So. Be my praise for those then,
And days when one must cull, compose,
And frame such facts to pose a paragon.

• JOHN LUCAS

SAGITTARIUS MAN / VIRGO WOMAN

*If your Venus is in Sagittarius . . . if her Mars is in Sagittarius
. . . physical relationship will be happy and exciting.*

John K. Atherton

Well, don't we have the luck though, you and I?
Ignoring horoscopes, I shameless shot
An aimless arrow at the zodiac sky
And scarcely recognized the prize I got.
You meanwhile grasped a single spike of grain
And never asked its astrologic field,
Its cosmic force, what strain it could sustain,
What joy to you or sorrow it would yield.
As deaf to admonition Adam and Eve
Before us floundered out of paradise,
Blindly we blundered in, by our own leave,
Attentive to no signs and no advice.

Conjecture at conjunction . . . Venus . . . Mars?
Let's push our luck, then thank our lucky stars.

A PAT REMARK AUGMENTED

*All of us
always
almost*

Few of us
never
even

Most of us
merely
nearly

None of us
ever
quite

POET OF MANY VOICES

By GEORGE P. ELLIOTT

Hell blot black for alway the thought "Peace!"

Let us slip in a couple of quick truths right at the outset. One about principle: We ought not allow our knowledge of the poet's person to influence our reading and judging of his poetry ("Honor the poet and hang the traitor"). The other about practice: In fact we allow it constantly, sometimes illegitimately out of prejudice, but sometimes legitimately when the poet uses himself as a subject of the poetry and uses the poetry as a way of projecting himself ("The poet as culture hero").

Pound's cultists say that it's his poetry that matters, his poetry that will live, his poetry that is great. Very well, let us look at it for a while — till we find ourselves looking through it at him. Then let us look plain at his person, which I, at least, find an even richer object for consideration than his poetry.

With the real artist there is always a residue, there is always something in the man which does not get into his work.

There is always some reason why the man is always more worth knowing than his books are.

I do not think this statement is true but I think it is true of Ezra Pound, who wrote it (in *Patria Mia*).

I

His poetry is most praised for the beauty of its sound, and anyone who has been able really to hear the poetry must know, in his own ear, why it is so praised. Indeed, it usually sounds so marvelous that the reader is often, as Eliot said, not much interested in what it means. This is a mercy: in most, though not in the best, of his poetry the meaning paraphrases out into one of three sad categories — private jabber, social analytics fluctuating from the obvious through the dubious to the vicious, or archaic platitudes of a Pre-Raphaelite cast. I'll begin by elaborating these three charges in turn.

Despite some lovely music in Canto 90 and a bar or two in Canto 105 ("Charles of the Suevi / a noose of light looped over his shoulder," which is excellent wherever it came from), the incoherence which troubled the *Cantos* from the very beginning back in the early '20's became progressively worse, until by the time *Thrones* was published nearly all the lovely music was so jammed that one could hear little more than the static thrown out by Pound's madness.

“Should,” said H. J., “for humanity’s credit
feign their existence
With the sun and moon on her shoulders,
the star-discs sewn on her coat
at Li Chiang, the snow range,
a wide meadow
and the ²dto-¹mba’s face (exorcist’s)
muy simpático
by the waters of Stone Drum,
the two aces

Exegesis be damned. Those lines neither mean nor are, and the *Cantos* contain hundreds more like them. (Such private references as H. J., i.e., Henry James, which abound in the *Cantos*, are cause only of obscurity of the parts, but not of incoherence of the whole.) Sane poets speak to themselves too, but in such a way that a reader can get pleasure from sharing in the imagined dialogue. In jabber like the above from Canto 101, it is a question whether Pound got through even to himself.

The most important of his social opinions concern economics and race. It is hard to take his proposed remedies for economic ills seriously, in themselves. His job as a poet was to make us take them seriously as a part of the poem at least, but he does this only in the case of usury. His economic argument runs: money is the key economic creation of society; its abuse is at the root of the worst social evils; usury is its chief abuse; let us condemn usury. Well and good. But when the reader comes upon the splendid usury passages in the *Cantos*, that Latin *usura* sounds less like a socio-economic concept than like one of the universal human sins which prophets have been scourging men for for 5,000 years. It is Pound's prophetic zeal which makes *usura* important in the poem; there is nothing to make the other historical-economic opinions much more than curious. In the poem, his most important social opinions are on race. These, which derive a half-respectable support from Frobenius' racial theories, vary from the conventional prejudices of his Idaho-Pennsylvania Protestant middle-class upbringing—"whereas the sight of a good nigger is cheering / the bad 'uns wont look you straight" (Canto 79)—to statements of a sort which were being published only surreptitiously by 1948 when Canto 74 was published:

The yidd is a stimulant, and the goyim are cattle in gt/ proportion and go to saleable slaughter with the maximum of docility.

The assumption behind this statement is that modern wars are caused by the bankers, who are controlled by international Jewry, that the Jew drives the Christians to slaughter because it is profitable. (Pound

also thought Stalin was a pawn of the Jews, somehow.) When this was written, the Auschwitz ovens were scarcely cool.

Pound's earlier poems and much of the first 60 Cantos say something which can be understood, and understood without offense. Unfortunately one has usually heard it before a good many times, either from medieval literature or prettied up by the Victorian Romantics (whom Pound mostly scorns in his criticism but whose themes many of his themes resemble). Still, a poem which sounds marvelous and means something unexceptional is obviously preferable to one that sounds as good and means practically nothing or means something obnoxious. "Alba, from 'Langue d'Oc'" is absolutely pure of sound.

When the nightingale to his mate
Sings day-long and night late
My love and I keep state
In bower,
In flower,
Till the watchman on the tower
Cry:

"Up! Thou rascal, Rise,
I see the white
Light
And the night
flies."

But the specific gravity of this poem is rather less than that of helium; twenty poems that light would keep a dirigible aloft. MAKE IT NEW! Pound is always shouting, but surely the idea, situation, sentiment in "Alba" is as venerable as *carpe diem*, nor is it newly adorned, nor, 300 years before, would the sound-patterning have astonished Thomas Campion a tenth as much as it would have delighted him. Reading a lot of Pound's verse generates the attitude that meaning doesn't much matter in poetry, lovely sound is enough. At such a pass, it is well to refer out from time to time to other and richer poetry, and so keep proportion; after a solid week of *Cantos* it is wise to turn back to "The Second Coming," say, for perspective. Read and reread "Alba" till you're swaying to it, but then turn to this poem of about the same size, a song by Josephine Miles, which is not only metrically masterful but says something hard to say, unparaphrasable, and her own—"new."

In friendship feeling quiet
I spent a time asleep,
And when I woke, the marrow
Out of my bones ran out
That you were the friend I dreamt for

But not the dream I woke for.
And so I put this down for
Doubt. For doubt.

Or, if it's unfair to compare "Alba" to a poem which means a good deal worth meaning, there's always "Full Fathom Five." It is about the same length and doesn't seem to mean much, but it has such magical and strange images that you can't *just* listen to it as you often can to Pound.¹

At this point let us admire the music of his poetry. I am also going to suggest that there is no such thing as the music of poetry.

At patterning verbal sounds, at metrics, Pound is one of the technical masters. It was not just out of courtesy or false humility that Eliot called him *il miglior fabbro*, the better craftsman, better at the carpentry and counterpoint of verse. (The phrase is applied by Guido Guinicelli to Arnaut Daniel in Canto XXVI of the *Purgatorio*. In life they were both excellent minor poets.) The special merits of Pound's craft, as of Spenser's, are more likely to be appreciated by other poets than by readers at large; this was especially true back in the wan Georgian days of the 1910's when he first made his mark. Eliot's praise is attributable not just to friendship and the gratitude of pupil to teacher but also to a genuine admiration for Pound's virtuosity. Pound's reputation will wane no doubt as Eliot's influence wanes, but I imagine that for a long time to come poets will be discovering Pound anew, swooning in the loveliness of his music, attending the meters of this master craftsman as they once listened to Spenser's.

Compleynt, compleynt I hearde upon a day,
Artemis singing, Artemis, Artemis
Agaynst Pity lifted her wail:
Pity causeth the forests to fail,
Pity slayeth my nymphs,
Pity spareth so many an evil thing.
Pity befouleth April,
Pity is the root and the spring.
Now if no fayre creature followeth me
It is on account of Pity,
It is on account that Pity forbideth them slaye.
All things are made foul in this season,
This is the reason, none may seek purity
Having for foulnesse pity

¹I know that a comparison to Shakespeare is nearly always invidious. My justifications for doing it now are that Pound's admirers have done it (see the passage about John Berryman below) and that I know of no other poem to illustrate this point.

And things grown awry;
No more do my shaftes fly
To slay. Nothing is now clean slayne
But rotteth away.

The control of line in this passage from Canto 30 is perfect — both the modulations in length, from the conventional iambic pentameter with which it opens to the two-, three-, and four- as well as five-stress lines with which it continues, and also the line-endings, some on an iamb, some on a trochee, a few with most delicate spondees. Pound's prosody has not been adequately described. (Not that the prosody of many good poets in English has been adequately described. Has Bridges on Milton any peer?) But fortunately for Pound, his verse, being irregular, "free," resists even the inadequate description of schoolbook prosodozing, which, by explaining so simply that it looks clear what is in fact a mystery of complexity, does more harm than good; and until his practice has been rationalized, even the initiate will have to keep on repeating with reverent perplexity: "What an ear." Meanwhile, the lines quoted above — and they mean something too, something harsh and worth hearing — should raise the hairs on any poetry reader's head.

Pater said, and Pound heeded, "All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music." Even if one accepts the gospel of art according to Walter, surely taking that saying literally is as absurd as the Jehovah's Witnesses' taking literally, "The meek shall inherit the earth." But Pound was a sort of fundamentalist in the religion of art: instead of speculating on, say, how realistic fiction and the cinema can be said to move towards the condition of music, and what "the condition of music" means anyhow, Pound set about writing lyrics which could be set to music and poems long or short which have as many of the qualities of music as he could devise. Yet there is surely a radical difference between the sound patterns of the words of even the most "musical" of lyrics and its actual musical accompaniment. "The music of poetry" remains intractably a metaphor, despite the fact that sound-patterning is of the essence of poetry as it is the essence of music. Poetry like music is composed of sound and structure; but, being made with words, both-ways-looking words, poetry unlike music is also composed of sense. Whatever "the condition of music" may be, meaningful words can aspire to it only as paint on canvass does, metaphorically. Take the last published Canto, 109: even if you have the languages, the erudition in Poundiana, and the patience to discover that it sounds fine, still it does not make enough coherent sense to be called poetry, and at the same time it too inescapably not-makes sense to be called music. It is a form of muttering, of muttery humming, with snarls.

Still, if his poetry sounds that good, and if the sense it makes is often inoffensive and sometimes good, then why is he so actively resisted? (A leper wrought marionettes of such elegance that those who looked at them would forget that it was the leper who had made them, and they felt neither admiration nor disgust for him, nor even pity, so rapt were they gazing at the few fine dolls he had been able to finish.) Most of the resistance to Pound's poetry is owing to a number of accidental reasons which will pass with time.²

An immediate reason that many people do not listen to Pound is resistance to high pressure from three chief sources: Pound's prose, his cultists, and T. S. Eliot. His prose, which not infrequently deals with ideas, events, persons, phrases that appear in his poetry, can turn you against these by its very techniques. After the mid 1920's, when the poetic rebellion had been accomplished, he gave up the exercise of power in the acceptable form of influencing poets and editors and turned to the writing of prose propaganda. In these pieces he uses all known typographical forms of emphasis, so that some of his articles are as imperspicuous as the *Heart* editorials they resemble, and are like no literary product of a recognizable kind. In the '30's he became an avid reader of hate-tracts, which commonly employ such typography. He became a sort of highbrow literary Westbrook Pegler.

WHAT is the USE OF LANGUAGE? WHY STUDY LITERATURE?

LANGUAGE was obviously created, and is, obviously, USED for communication.

"Literature is news that STAYS news."

The best smith, as Dante called **Arnaut Daniel** made the birds sing **IN HIS WORDS**; I don't mean that he merely referred to birds singing —

(from *The ABC of Reading*)

He so attacks and belabors the reader — bad poetry — America — England — the Jews — the bankers — Tennyson — anyone who doesn't think Confucius supplies *the* answer to social ills — U. S. publishers for not printing Martin Van Buren's autobiography until 1920 — Milton — that before long the reader's resistance to that sheer propaganda extends to the poetry. The next source of pressure is from the E. P. cult, whose priests cannot be borne even when they are as erudite

²Some trouble is caused by the temporary labels "fascist," "anti-semitic," "traitor," "psychotic." An instance of how they can baffle communication is provided by a queasy anecdote, recounted by Charles Norman in his recent biography *ÉZRA POUND* (Macmillan, \$6.95), concerning the publisher's "liberal" deletion, just after the war, of Pound's poems from the Benét-Aiken *Anthology of Famous English and American Poetry* and later "liberal" reinstatement of the poems.

and intelligent as Hugh Kenner. Kenner's general strategy is to stand at the door of Temple EP and beckon you urgently with the left hand, but as you approach the sanctum to sock you with the right because you are so stupid as not to be in already. In his book *The Poetry of Ezra Pound*, he sets out to justify, in the most arrogant tone, Pound's ways to man.

There are, if the reader must be presented with a bunch of keys, three or four that will help him unlock most of the *Cantos*.

Anyone can feel the play of silent cryptic finality in a Chinese ideogram, against adjacent fluidity or muddle or struggle after a word, without knowing what the ideogram means.

Even when we can't read them [irreducible formulations such as "brododaktulos Eos"], their very inscrutability performs half their poetic function.

The trouble with statements like these last two is not their intrinsic silliness, though this is indeed superb, but that they derive from a sustained determination to admit no weakness and to turn every fault into a virtue, which abuse of the intellect may not be tolerated. The prime source of irrational opposition to Pound's poetry has been T. S. Eliot himself, who abused his powers in the case of Pound, as in no other, by overinsistence. He, the commanding general of literary taste, stood so high above the thuggery of cultism that he could take the pose of having next to nothing to do with the cult — although, to be sure, he has been careful to congratulate it from time to time and, as a matter of fact, he had created it in the first place. Eliot wrote in 1928 that Pound's "epistolary style is masterly"; you read Pound's letters and find they are quite fascinating, but if their style is masterly what just epithet is left for that of Rilke's letters? Proust's? Van Gogh's? "Among the infinite stinks of a foetid era," Pound wrote in 1938 in an essay, "is that arising from the difficulty of not being able to do a man [literary] justice without committing some sort of inflation." Right. Eliot insists that Pound is a great critic; you read Eliot's selection of Pound's literary essays, as well as *The Spirit of Romance*. It is true that studded through them there are brilliant illuminations; but it is also true that not one essay is a successful work of art in itself and that there is not a sufficient coherence among the ideas of the essays to make his criticism at all comparable in excellence to Eliot's own — this despite the fact that Pound planted a lot, perhaps most, of the ideas Eliot matured. The episode epitomizing Eliot's overpowering dictation in Pound matters is the famous Bollingen award in 1949. It is hard to imagine ten or twelve American literary gentiles, respectable enough to get appointed to a

Library of Congress committee, who could—*could*—in the same room with T. S. Eliot have opposed his nomination of Ezra Pound. The passage “Pull down thy vanity” from Canto 81 might in all conscience have been considered better than anything in any other American’s book of poems published during 1948. But the prize was for a book of poems, not for a passage or for a poet’s life-work. It is not very likely that almost all the judges would have, on their own, found *The Pisan Cantos* as a whole better than any of the books published the year before by Jarrell, W. C. Williams, MacLeish, Hanson, Scott, Jeffers, Roethke, and a dozen others, had *The Pisan Cantos* been written by one Joseph Blow and sponsored by a judge as non-dictatorial as Leonie Adams or Willard Thorp. One’s heart goes out to Karl Shapiro for managing to stand up at all against Eliot—even though he did it primarily for the wrong reason, not as a poet but as a Jew.

Pound’s been oversold. In his reputation, as in most things, he inspires superlatives. Pound’s detractors are no less intemperate than his cultists. The most eminent of these is Robert Graves, who, in an essay in the *New Republic* for February 27 and March 5, 1956, derogated and slurred Pound along with Yeats, Eliot, Auden, and Thomas in the corundum accents of poet’s envy. Karl Shapiro in his recent *In Defense of Ignorance* sounds little better. A moderate opinion of Pound’s poetry will be attacked from both sides, though it is certainly possible.³ My contention is that a brief collection of his best early lyrics and of autonomous lyrical passages from the *Cantos*—New Direction’s *Selected Poems of Ezra Pound*—is an excellent compilation—encompasses all his durable poetry and that this poetry, viewed quite apart from the poet’s historical importance, is exquisite and technically masterful, but slight in its impact.

“I scarcely know what to say of Pound’s ear. Fifteen years of listening have not taught me that it is inferior to the ear of the author of *Twelfth Night*.” So wrote John Berryman in *Partisan Review* for April 1949, making the biggest claim. Then he goes on to say of poets: “We write with our ears.” It takes a man of brilliance and passion to push a figure of speech until it becomes wrong enough to illuminate the truth. *The Poet’s Tongue* is the name Auden gave his first (and liveliest) anthology. Tongue is a metonym for speaking, ear for listening; and the poet is sayer not hearer. “We read with our ears, we write with our tongues”—that’s as far as the trope will stretch.

Let the ear stand for the hearing. Let the tongue stand for the

³ M. L. Rosenthal’s *A PRIMER OF EZRA POUND* (Macmillan, \$2.50) is intelligently admiring and avoids cultism. It strikes me as a place where a novice in the study of Pound might well begin, though not one to loiter in.

speaking. Let the voice stand for the person of the speaker and hearer. Greatness in poetry implies, above all, power, range, and steadiness of voice, and when Pound's voice possesses any of these qualities it is not his own. In any case, "great" and "major" are terms that ought to be used with discretion.⁴ Even if "major" is extended far enough to include Yeats, it cannot reach to Pound, who — hyperbolically speaking — scarcely knows as poet whose voice to call his own.

In his poetry there are audible the voices of quite literally scores of other writers of many and diverse ages and schools: in translation, adaptation, allusion, quotation, parody, imitation, borrowing, reference, by every conceivable literary device. One of the small interests in reading him is trying to define him by identifying those whom he is like: Swinburne, Browning, Byron, Waller, Josh Billings, hate-sheet hacks, Spenser, James, Whitman, Yeats, a dozen Ph.D.'s worth in foreign languages alone. Usually it helps define a poet to compare him to another: "Roethke's later work is like Yeats" implies a strong sense of who Roethke the poet is. But a strange thing happens with Pound: the more poets he is like the less one is sure who Pound is. It becomes their voices as much as his that one hears. It is as though Pound were a medium most of the time, his head full of spirit voices, many of them exceedingly powerful and lovely, a few of them dull, some hideous; it is as though he were a verbal mimic hearing the words of his saying as he says them. Pound did not assume many voices, as Browning did or as any dramatist must, for strategic reasons but because he was arrogant and hollow. Eliot said of Pound that his hell was only for others; he neither supposed himself as being in hell nor hell as being in himself. Very arrogant and very hollow.

Consider a number of his best-known poems. In these famous lines, which he wrote while a prisoner, he preaches on a text from Ecclesiastes.

"Master thyself, then others shall thee beare"

Pull down thy vanity

Thou art a beaten dog beneath the hail,

A swollen magpie in a fitful sun,

Half black half white

Nor knowst 'ou wing from tail

Pull down thy vanity

How mean thy hates

⁴ As Pound knows. He was visited at St. Elizabeth's by two young poets. This interchange is reported in Norman's biography.

"But don't you think Yeats is a major poet?"

Pound: "Is he a Homer, is he a Dante?"

"That's a mighty high standard."

Pound (laughing): "I think Yeats is the greatest minor poet who ever lived."

Fostered in falsity,
Pull down thy vanity,
Rathe to destroy, niggard in charity,
Pull down thy vanity,
I say pull down.

I have heard a preacher in the Upper Lake Community Church in California who could work that handsome passage into his sermon any Sunday in Lent—except for “thee,” “thy,” “‘ou,” “rathe,” and “niggard”—and nobody in his congregation would turn a hair. Both he and they would assume that he would be speaking not in his own person but as a prophet of God’s will. However, read with reference to Pound, it seems to work out this way: either it is the moral Pound chiding himself for his own vanity (and there is almost nothing else of this nature in his writings) or else it is Ezra in a prophet’s mask commanding us who have imprisoned him to pull down our vanity for no better reason than that he says to (and surely his moral authority just after the war was hollow); at the most, forgetting who wrote the passage, it is the voice of a prophet without authority chiding all mankind, himself included, in large general terms. In “The River Merchant’s Wife,” an early poem celebrated for its poignance and the perfection of its delicacy, Pound assumed a young Chinese woman’s voice, or rather, he assumed it in imitation of the way it had already been imagined in the eighth century by Rihaku (the Japanese name for Li Po). When Pound speaks in Canto 45 of usury, the evil which he considers to be at the root of most, and especially of modern American, social ills, he assumes a voice both archaic and non-American: “with usura / seeth no man Gonzaga his heirs and his concubines.” Even though his translations of Guido Cavalcanti are superb, Pound is not a great translator. It’s simple: a great translator must render a great poet, and what is Guido beside Dante? (What a pity that Pound did not translate Dante. Surely he, perhaps alone of poets in English in recent times, could have done justice to the *Comedy*.) In most of the Mauberley poems he assumes the voice of a persona so closely parodying his own that the first poem of the sequence bears the title “E. P. Ode . . .” Admirable as most of these poems are, they invite comparison in form, tone, and theme with the satires, also in quatrains, which Eliot was writing at about the same time. Pound’s meters are subtler, but surely Eliot’s, in “The Hippopotamus” and “Sweeney Among the Nightingales”, are stronger; in those two, Eliot’s meaning is more available, his images more striking, and his ideas no less important. One can speak of *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* as a single poem portraying a minor literary man ironically rendered; well enough; but the matter is excessively literary and recondite, and the image projected is neither as substantial nor as

coherent as that of another unimportant, weak man, J. Alfred Prufrock.⁵ The masterpiece of the sequence and by general consent the little masterpiece of his short poems, is "Envoi."

Go, dumb-born book
Tell her that sang me once that song of Lawes:
Hadst thou but song
As thou hast subjects known,
Then were there cause in thee that should condone
Even my faults that heavy upon me lie,
And build her glories their longevity.

It is the truest poetry: it makes comparisons odious. And this despite the almost incredible fact that to achieve this pure, small perfection, Pound assumed another man's voice —

Goe lovely Rose,
Tell her that wastes her time and me,
That now she knowes,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be —

and then sang in that voice better than Waller himself did. Pound knew better than Eliot how to hew *The Waste Land* out of a double bulk of Eliot's verses. The formula by which Yeats chose to praise one of Pound's poems, "The Return," was this: "It gives me better words than my own." The poet of many voices.

So here we are looking at the poet himself.

Most of those who are convinced of Pound's greatness say it is embodied in the *Cantos*. Let us look at them. The question raised by the *Cantos* is: What holds them together? It is a question asked by all who read the poem; it was asked by Yeats, whom Pound told to wait for Canto 100, when the *Cantos* would "display a structure like that of a Bach Fugue"; it has even been asked by Eliot. The cohesive force is not a narrative; it is not chronology or logical discourse; it is not steadiness of theme nor even consistency of verse form. If there is a quality which a long poem like any other work of art must possess to be called great, that quality is coherence. At every moment in the *Iliad*, whatever clear detail Homer may be directing your attention to, you are aware of a grand, realizable structure into which this detail, good or not so good in itself, belongs. Your secure awareness of this structure provides a kind of solidity of response which frees you, as life seldom leaves you free, to contemplate those

*Just for fun: Eliot called *Maunderley* a great poem; Leavis said it was Pound's one great poem; Fraser says it is better than *The Wasteland*. Wyndham Lewis, who wrote at length about Pound in *Time and Western Man*, ignores it; Yeats did not include it in his *Oxford Book of Modern Verse*; Graves casts it along with all other Pound impedimenta into the bottomless pit.

ultimate matters with which the poem concerns itself, and such solidity is impossible in a poem which diverts attention to itself by the radical doubt, "Are these parts held together well enough?" Such doubt is no part of the *Iliad* or the *Divine Comedy*; in *The Faërie Queene* it shows itself, and it vexes *The Prelude* from time to time; *Don Juan* abandons pretense to greatness by declaring itself unified by little more than ottava rima and Byron's views and whims. We are told that Pound's subject is all high culture as refracted through his vast knowledge and concern. We are asked to see "the tradition" incarnate in, say, the first Canto, which gives a superb translation (anyhow it sounds superb in English) of a passage from Divus's (we are told superb) 1538 translation of the *Odyssey* into Renaissance Latin. All sorts of odds and ends of translations, quotations, allusions from literature and history, ancient and modern, Occidental and Oriental, poetry and prose, keep appearing; we are asked to admire this eclecticism quite as though it were passé to mention selectivity as a postulate of order.

The esthetic version of the question is: Do the *Cantos* have a true structure? Can the reader explain — no, that's too much: can he securely feel that in the *Cantos* there is a stable, rational structure such as the highest excellence always builds and is always built upon? I think not; at least, I am not able rationally to grasp that order either from studying the poem or any of the exegeses of it — a disability I share with all those with whom I have discussed the matter, including some whose critical assent only a madman would spurn. The justifiers, of whom Kenner is the most elaborate, assert that there is such a structure but that it is so novel as to elude or antagonize most contemporary readers, although, in time and with help, future readers will come to accept and appreciate it. This argument is too considerable to ignore.

First of all, one must agree that such a state of things is possible; there is precedent for it. Along the way, one must agree with Kenner that the antagonism towards Pound for his obscurity and private reference is no more legitimate than is such antagonism towards Dante, and that what he calls, after Eliot, "the poetry of surface" is indeed more difficult than the poetry of emotional depth. A willing reader can put up with a lot he does not understand and will consent to a good many footnotes, so long as he can feel — not can talk about intellectually but can feel — that the poem has a structure that gives meaning even to the parts of which he is ignorant. Kenner, agreeing, devotes his energies to persuading you that the *Cantos* do have such a structure, the main principle of which seems to be "the rhythms of recurrence." It is not only a host of subjects, public and private, which recur, but also contrasting sets of imagery, for example those of mud and light. These sub-elements are composed into "ideo-

grams" or "vortices," which, according to Kenner, are the structural units of the poem. Such a unit "is not unlike the Joycean epiphany: a highly concentrated manifestation of a moral, cultural, or political quiddity." Granted that this statement means something, the recurrence of such elements cannot be called a structure. Recurrence regular enough to be called rhythmic (I fail to perceive any such regularity as Kenner suggests is there) could no doubt provide a sort of large "swaying" to the poem which would help hold it together. But behind recurrence there is the fundamental question: why the recurrence? Anybody can concoct ten dozen disparate themes, subjects, image-types, rhythms, attitudes, cultural quiddities, and keep popping them up one and another in patterns of varying complication and banality. This is merely technique; anyone who studied Kenner hard enough could do it. If the recurrences and juxtapositions of the *Cantos* are there for their own sake, the poem is elaborately trivial. Kenner fails to make clear what structurally valuable end these recurrences serve.

Roy Harvey Pearce believes that the *Cantos* have no structure but that they do have an ultimate purpose.

... it is not possible to put down even briefly the poem's dialectic; for it has none. That is, it has no linear, composed, structured form; no rhythmic periodicities; rather it consists of decorously managed, ideogramatically set down instants of insight which are to force themselves beyond abstractness into the reader's consciousness and so to make him new.⁶

Finally, Pearce's statement says little about the poem but something blood-curdling about the poet (he intended to write epic poetry in the manner of a totalitarian Madison Avenue, directly yet deviously to change you). Any statement, beyond the merely vapid, purporting to explain what holds the *Cantos* together must, if it is not to disappear into murk and nonsense, point at the author himself.

The last-ditch argument is that the *Cantos* are unified by the personality of their creator. Put in such a form as this, the argument cannot be flatly dismissed: "Because Pound is a master prosodist, is very learned, and is passionately concerned for the welfare of society, literature, and culture, he is permitted to write about anything whatever in any order he pleases. The *Cantos* are great because they express Pound." Roughly similar justifications could be presented for calling the assembled writings of Montaigne and Yeats great: they express great selves. A tenable position. Now suppose one were to grant of Pound that he was capable of insight as honest as Montaigne's or as deep as Yeats's, or that he possessed any autobiographic

⁶ *The Hudson Review*, XII (Autumn 1959), p. 374.

quality of comparable magnitude, yet the persona projected in his work must be, like theirs, coherent if the *Cantos* are to prove his greatness as a poet. If their unity is to derive from the person of their creator (and where else is one to look for it?), then we necessarily find ourselves contemplating Pound himself. That self is not integrated. By the inescapable logic of such a defender as G. S. Fraser,⁷ the *Cantos* fall into bits because Pound is radically incoherent — not only the man-in-history certified insane, but also the maker as you come to know him by reading that large, occasionally splendid, disintegrating bundle of poetry and mutter.

II

"One of those authentic American monsters," said R. V. Cassill, "of whom Frank Lloyd Wright was another." Fully to portray Pound would be, among other things, to illuminate the American cast of genius in the first part of the twentieth century, the cracked cast of our genius.

Being a good poet is not in itself a recommendation for much of a biography. An enjoyable biography of Wallace Stevens would very likely be eight or nine pages long, nor should T. S. Eliot's, in all likelihood, turn out to be a tome — that is, the definitive one certainly will be a tome but the ideal one would not. On the other hand, there are authentic American geniuses who never made a thing worthy of their gifts but an extended account of whose lives (like Johnson's *Life of Savage*) would make good reading. As a poet Pound is of course to be judged not on his character but solely by his best poetry, but as a subject for a biography he is revealed by all his poetry, because it fluctuates so wildly in quality as well as because many of its materials are his own experiences and ideas. This is not true of all, perhaps not of many poets; one learns very little about Wordsworth by reading those dull later poems, and as little about Dickinson from the unpublishabilia printed in the variorum. Pound is never confessional and seldom intimate, even in his letters; one of the necessary ways to get a sense of him is to go through the *Cantos*, as well as the essays, pamphlets, and letters, reading them not for their literary merit or demerit but as expressions of a complex man.

⁷ EZRA POUND (Grove, \$1.25), p. 77: "the coherence with incoherence, the obstinate sense of direction masked by wild distractability, of the *Cantos* is the coherence and sense of direction, perpetually threatened by chaos but perpetually also re-forming itself, of Pound's life-drive, of his mind." The book is informed with good sense and perception about Pound, his poetry, and his critics; it is a good one to go on to after Rosenthal's *Primer*. But Fraser's tone is partisan and inconclusive at once, Britishly charming, rather more suitable for house-cats like de la Mare or Blunden than for a tiger like Pound.

To be sure, Pound may, like another wasted subject, Byron, never find an intelligent, meticulous biographer with a sense of "this much and no more" and with a passionate admiration for his subject, whom his imagination yet encompasses as a whole being profoundly flawed and in some respects despicable. Moreover, it is quite possible that Pound's biographer might need to employ a technique other than the hands-off, accumulative one so handsomely used by Ellmann in James Joyce. For, the question of Pound's identity being raised by the facts, the biographer must exercise profound artifice in ordering those facts to answer it. The adequate biography of Pound would be, unlike most literary biographies, including Boswell's and Ellmann's, exciting to read on the surface as well as in depth. The events and contrasts and reversals are exciting in themselves (he was raised from low estate to high, whence, like a figure in a medieval tragedy, he was cast down into great adversity); just as exciting would be the felt sense that one man did it all himself (like the hero of a psychological novel). Personality is intrinsically mysterious, and for Pound's strangeness any overt explanation, even a thorough-seeming genetic one, must be partial and flattening. The biographer will need a new way to hold the book, and his conception of the man, together. However, it will probably not be till after Pound's death, till after some of the prejudices and propaganda he leaves behind have faded a good deal, that the necessary, bare facts can be assembled, much less arranged, by his hoped-for biographer — by the intruder in his dust.*

* Meanwhile, till that splendid book appears — if it does — we outsiders must make do with what's available. At the moment, this is Norman's *Ezra Pound*, which is to the adequate one as Mrs. Piozzi's *Anecdotes of the Late Samuel Johnson* is to Boswell's *Life*. The book collects facts not easily or at all available elsewhere, for which anyone interested in Pound's life must be duly grateful. I am not informed enough to judge the accuracy of the facts included in Norman's biography but I know he is not as thorough as he claims to be. "Mr. Norman is personally acquainted with many of the writers and artists who people the story, and has been in touch with every living person who knew Pound or knew anything about him." This sentence, which occurs in the poop sheet which the publisher included with review copies of *Ezra Pound*, must surely take its origin in Norman's claim. But I know a man who was connected with Pound for several years after the war, who is neither obscure nor hard to find, and who is by reason of his position known to be connected with Pound; neither in person nor by letter did he receive an inquiry from Norman. Then there are whole catalogues of facts which the biography mentions obscurely, almost pruriently hints at. The most important concern Pound's daughter. The reader is told of the Pound's son, but he first learns of the existence of a daughter, mother unspecified, in the caption of a photograph of Pound at her castle with his grandchildren at some unspecified time after his release from St. Elizabeth's. She is mentioned elsewhere in the text a few times, but her very existence remains unacknowledged in the index. More or none, not these teasers. Insofar as the book interprets the facts it does collect, it is not far short of worthless. The opening and closing paragraphs are journal-

The great question posed by Pound's life is the change that he underwent in the mid 1920's. His fame, except as a curiosity, had by that time not spread far outside the *avant-garde*. His power over important poets was waning. In the literary rebellion of the first quarter of the century, he was the great fomenter, but he wanted to be commander-in-chief of the victorious rebels as well, and that post went to the better general, Eliot. (Pound has been carrying on guerilla tactics against him ever since: the magnanimity of an old friend now commander-in-chief must seem to the former leader to be tinged with condescension even when it is not.) He was embarked on a poem with pretensions as great as those of the *Divine Comedy*. He withdrew from the world to Rapallo,⁹ with the intention of accomplishing his great task in something like Joyce's famous "silence, exile, and cunning."

On the surface of it, this action was by no means unreasonable and could be hoped to be greatly fruitful. After all, fomenting rebellion, even in the worthiest of causes, is not a poet's proper work; and once the strife is over, win, lose, or draw, the poet with all honor can and indeed should retire from the world and write his poetry — as Milton did. Moreover, there seemed plenty of indication in Pound's earlier years that he had qualities which would enable him richly to employ such retirement. Had the *Cantos* turned out to be a *Paradise Lost* in accomplishment as in pretension, and had he not entered into madness, the admirable qualities manifest in his early life would in retrospect provide sufficient explanation for that later fulfillment.

Foremost and without qualification there was his proved mastery of meters, without which nothing. More obvious but less unqualified, there was his passionate, if somewhat political, devotion to literature; still, it was his intention to withdraw from such politicking, from the influencing of writers and editors in the cause of Culture, from the manipulating of history, in order to devote all his passion to the better cause, writing poetry. He was full of esoteric knowledge (and, it must be admitted, half-knowledge): his concern for the

istic clichés proper to a hack-writer's hired biography of a first-generation oil millionaire. The paragraph on page 176 on the question of anti-semitism embodies not the incoherence of energetic madness but the incoherence of flaccid liberal confusion. The caliber of Norman's understanding may be gauged by these sentences from page 273, concerning Pound's leaving Paris for Italy in 1923 or 1924: "Something was driving Pound — eastward as it happened, but the United States was out of his calculations, and eastward was the only direction he could go. Perhaps he was running from something — himself, most probably."

* This withdrawal was even, or perhaps especially, from other writers. In 1933 Yeats went to him (for the last time) to ask what he thought of *The King of the Great Clock Tower*, about which the author had doubts; the once-great teacher and mentor had one word for it, "Putrid."

spirit of obscure texts rather than for the letter sometimes helped rescue good poetry from threatening oblivion (although not infrequently at the expense of damage to the spirit because of his neglecting the letter, e.g., it is not just admiration which his use of Chinese inspires among those who know both languages). His experience was wide; he knew many, and was intimate with some, of the great creative spirits of the age.

Moreover, he possessed a quality of soul so noble that one who sees it even from the distance of many years must revere it: his generosity. It is tempting to suppose that such generosity, in almost every way more admirable than a self-concern like Joyce's, would make a good artist all the better, but alas, it is not so. Indeed, there seems to be no clear connection between an artist's character and his work: if there is a meanness to Dostoevsky, Richardson was meaner yet; if there was a goodness to Tolstoy, Scott was better. Pound's generosity has literary relevance not to his poetry but only to his concern for literature (for his biographer, however, that concern is quite as important as the poetry). There are anecdotes of the kind biography thrives on to exemplify his generosity. An early one is recounted in a letter, quoted by Norman, from a former college mate of Pound's; it was a practical joke which backfired and shamed its perpetrators. They had aroused Pound from sleep in the college dorm, because of the supposed illness of a friend, and succeeded so well in convincing him that there was an emergency that he rushed off barefoot through snow to fetch a specified — but non-existent — doctor. Two hours later he returned with a doctor, who prescribed for the fake invalid and left.

Hardly was he out of the door when we pounced on Pound. "What did you do when you left here?" "Why," said Ezra, "you gave me a wrong address. I had to wake up three doctors before I could get one to come and he only came because he was an instructor in the University."

The prime and overwhelming evidence of his generosity is his selfless aid to other writers, whether by helping them improve what they were composing, by pushing their reputations, or by scraping up money so they might have more time and leisure. It was out of no friendship or obligation that he did what he did for Joyce. It was, for example, solely because he thought *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* was a splendid novel that he urged it upon a New York publisher who was about to publish a book of Pound's own (*This Generation*). The following quotation is from a letter to Miss Weaver (whom he persuaded to give financial support to Joyce, not to himself.)

I have just written him [the publisher] direct a very strong letter re Joyce, advising him to print the Joyce in preference to my book, if his capital is limited. I can't go further than that.

You have to look a while to find many writers who have gone half that far for a fellow writer, for any reason, ever; certainly not Joyce.

Despite these admirable qualities of character and these demonstrated gifts, Pound in fact did not accomplish what he had retired to accomplish. Therefore, wise with hindsight, one looks at his earlier life for signs of the later disintegration. They are there, but they do not seem determinative.

There is a quality that can be made to look retrospectively sinister: he wanted desperately to be important. He did not just want a reform in English poetry, he wanted to be the cause of it. He always wrote power-prose, quite aside from his ranting: in his essays he did not discover as he went, thereby involving the reader in the excitements of discovery, but asserted his conclusions.

It is perhaps only now that all these disagreeable phenomena can be traced to maladministration of credit. Artists are the race's antennae. The effects of social evil show first in the arts. Most social evils are at root economic. I, personally, know of no social evil that cannot be cured, or very largely cured, economically.

The lack of printed and exchangeable slips of paper corresponding to extant goods is at the root of bad taste, it is at the root not of bad musical composition, but at the root of the non-performance of the best music, ancient, modern, and contemporary, it is at the root of the difficulty in printing good books *when* written.¹⁰

He sought out the great and took pleasure in acquaintance with the eminent. He fended off most people as The Many, The Masses, the Folk; but even those he knew personally he saw not so much as themselves as The Few, The Company of the Best, Culture-Makers. He seemed sometimes to reverse the proposition *I shall know the Best* to read *If I am impressed by him he must be one of the Best*. Anthelil his friend must be the best composer, and Gaudier, his dear friend, must be the best sculptor; no, not just the best but the ONLY ones worth talking about. Frobenius was not just an anthropologist with whom Pound became acquainted because he admired his theories, especially those on race; he is *the* thinker on the subject.¹¹ Yet

¹⁰ The quotation is from "Murder by Capital," one of Pound's social essays collected in IMPACT. Regnery. \$5.00.

¹¹ In the matter of identifying The Few, The Best, only Pound's ear was reliable: if his ear was impressed by a poet, that poet was almost certainly one of the

Pound was never egotistical like Yeats, he did not boast like Shakespeare, he did not sponge like Rilke. And if the desire for fame damns a writer, God help us all.

Pound's flagrant bohemianism in dress and conduct signifies nothing in itself; however when contrasted with the solid eccentricity of a Joyce or a Picasso, it looks like the loud bravura of one who is not sure. An early glimpse of this is provided by a snatch from a letter by D. H. Lawrence (quoted by Norman, page 130):

... and there stood a young, callow, swashbuckling Ezra, with an ear-ring in one ear, very affected and silly. Then came his parents to London to see him, after Ezra had the London drawing-rooms bewitched by his mannerisms and affectations; and they were good plain middle-western folks — and Ezra died away, and there were pa and ma, good and plain and middle-western, and poor Ezra not knowing what to do about them.

Williams reports that in college Pound was afraid to pick up a girl alone and that he read his poetry in an almost inaudible whisper. Many report that in gatherings he was watchful for the effect he was making. Graves met him in T. E. Lawrence's rooms at All Souls' in 1922. "He was plump, hunched, soft-spoken, and ill-at-ease, with the limpest of handshakes." Yet he was also a shouter, and he bullied many, lady editors especially. But other poets have been shaky and then have found a rock to stand on, and shocking the respectable can become a form of respectability: witness T. S. Eliot.

The worst symptom of his deterioration was his racism. Surely there are early signs of that? There are, but not very alarming ones. His prejudices about the inferiority of Negroes, the contaminatory power of Jewish blood, and the desirability of racial purity were as usual in his folks' respectable white Protestant world as doilies and Thanksgiving turkeys, before he aggravated them into carcinomatous growth. Later, in the London and Paris literary world in which he moved during his great decade, anti-semitism was fashionable enough, and notions of race supremacy led more intellectuals than Pound towards fascism. Those early racial attitudes begin to look threatening only when considered along with the zeal with which he sometimes exhorted to violence. One of Pound's early and strongest poems celebrated poetically what thirty years later he was to term his blood-lust; this is "Sestina: Altaforte," whose speaker is Bertrams de Born and which utters a pure cry for dissension, war, and

best. The reverse does not hold. E. A. Robinson was both as a poet and as a man just about the antithesis of Pound, inward, unobtrusive, with a voice of his own. Pound heard him much less well than he heard Lindsay or Sandburg. There is also a noteworthy exception to the reliability of his ear, in his enduring fondness for Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat*. (Pound's son is named Omar.)

slaughter. (The epigraph to this essay is from that poem.) In the prefatory note, Pound specifically challenges his supreme master, Dante, who "put this man in hell for that he was a stirrer up of strife. Eccovi! Judge ye! Have I dug him up again?" But, after all, this violence was contained within poems, essays, and conversations; he did not in fact combine it with his racial prejudices before the '30's; the rebellions he urged were literary in the early days. Wordsworth in his youth had been a rebel too, and look what came of that.

Very well: in 1926 shortly after the birth of his son,¹² the poet retired to dedicate himself to the composition of the magnum opus which he had begun a few years earlier. But his frenzy, so the sequel proved, had not really been caused by the external excitement of Paris or London, of the capitals; it was not ameliorated by the external quietness of Rapallo; he became frenzied even about Confucius, that calm, sensible man. The epic as it came out did not wring pure praise even from those Few whom he would assume to be most likely to appreciate it: Yeats, Joyce,¹³ even Eliot.

It is not unlikely that the *Cantos*' failure to satisfy contributed to Pound's great shift during the succeeding few years — though no doubt it is just as likely that both the shift and the failure ultimately derived from the same obscure causes; it was not only over his long poem that he lacked a stern, Miltonic discipline.

What is certain is that Pound, despite his intentions, did not in fact withdraw from distracting affairs. At first he continued his literary maneuvering, by a correspondence which grew to be voluminous. But by the '30's this literary zeal had dwindled, and political economy had become his overwhelming obsession. By the time of the Second World War, he was so unhinged that he wrote no poetry but only pamphlets on social issues and could imagine it not incompatible with his duties as a citizen to urge, over an enemy radio in time of war, his country's soldiers to quit fighting. How to understand this change?

Finally, to be sure, it cannot be encompassed, except in such vapid terms as: "He never achieved maturity" or "he suffered from paranoia." More proximately, however, in addition to the qualities of person already mentioned, two general social elements are involved in Pound's breaking.

The first scarcely needs demonstrating: in the '20's the old order really was breaking up and the sense of doom was everywhere. It

¹² Whom the Pounds immediately gave to Mrs. Pound's mother to raise — in London, from which Pound had not long before fled as noxious and stultifying. They had almost nothing to do with their son thereafter.

¹³ Joyce had no higher regard for the *Cantos* than Pound had for *Finnegans Wake* — which is an amusement to those of us who hold neither of the marvelous monstrosities in high regard.

had become unmistakable that there was more than a stale literary tradition to reform; there was a whole civilization threatened with destruction and salvageable only by radical measures. Many, seeing this, drew back into their shells; many cracked. Pound exploded, and crumbled.

The second, if it is to provide a convincing though partial explanation of this explosion, needs some elaboration: the American cast of his enormous, out-going creative energy. That he possessed such energy is attested to both by the huge volume of his writing and by all who knew him well. The dominant quality of this energy is most favorably suggested by the frequent characterization of him as a born teacher—talking much, eager to persuade. He had and retained the high gift of sowing seeds and of imparting to others, at the right time, just that enthusiasm and those ideas which would germinate and bear fruit: Yeats; Eliot. Here are two unliterary instances of this faculty.

He is one of the discoverers of Vivaldi in our time, and it is because he had the Vivaldi works in Dresden copied for him that they have been preserved. The originals were destroyed by Allied bombings.¹⁴

To put on his opera *Villon* in 1926, Pound took the trouble to find a *corne*, a five-foot horn made of real horn. . . . It was capable of only two notes, separated by an interval. Thomson said: "The low note was hard to blow, but rather grand." The other note was a fifth above it. This medieval instrument was played by Tinayre's brother Paul. Tinayre said it was because of this horn that he devoted the next twenty years to research in medieval music.

But great energy may obviously be a curse to a man without discipline: the born teacher may sow bad seed. If Pound is to be credited for the good seed he planted, so must he be debited for the bad, which has born some vile fruit: Kasper.¹⁵

¹⁴ One of the maddening things about Norman is, as here, that he often does not specify. Which pieces did Pound rescue? What do we owe him in this case?

¹⁵ This charge can be fully substantiated only by Kasper himself. The usual defense for Pound is that Kasper, once he wanted such racist ideas, could have found them elsewhere so that Pound is not at all responsible for Kasper's later actions. But it was never original ideas that Pound communicated; it was a stimulation and excitement which led to action. Eliot had a large confusing bundle of verses on his hands; he turned to Pound; later, he came forth with a shaped poem. Kasper led a bohemian-fringe, do-nothing, dissatisfied life, numbering Negroes and Jews among his acquaintance; he turned to Pound; later, he became (as he remains) a notorious stirrer up of racial strife. Fortunately, the former sort of Pound's influencing yielded much good fruit and the latter little bad fruit. But if he is honored by the one, surely he is dishonored by the other. They are the right and left hands of the same man.

Not a little of Pound's imperfect discipline derived from that very American optimism which had no doubt partly helped to release his energy in the first place. If poetry was in the doldrums, if kulchur needed revivifying, if people needed to be taught the ABC's of reading or economics, if the structure of society needed overhauling or the college curriculum in literature needed changing, if America was in the war on the wrong side, Pound was always ready to do something about it. He sometimes thought he was the best man to do it (and sometimes he was), he sometimes tried to goad others better qualified to do whatever he decided needed doing; but he never doubted that he could do something, if only propagandize for the book or man who could achieve the desired end. Part of his rant is the rage of a balked optimist. None of the progressivists he despised, not H. G. Wells himself, could have been more set than Pound against the notion that there is nothing to do but bear it or to hope at most to put your own soul in order, or that it doesn't matter anyway. And nothing is more characteristic of American optimism than that it is expansive, unwilling to admit limits, or even, at Whitman's extreme, assertive in denying limits.

The magnitude of what Pound set himself, first as a poet, then as a citizen of the world, would have appalled anyone more sure of himself than Pound was. His very unsureness, obscured by his previous successes as a rebel leader and by his egregious optimism, created a driving need to perform. He understood far more than he could accomplish. He would not give up. The size of the task, and rage at his inadequacy, broke him.

However base the aftermath, it was a noble breaking. As a poet he set himself the task of a modern Dante. In a time when poets felt the world coming apart, Pound undertook to assemble the pieces in one coherent poem. But Dante had the support of an intellectual structure by which to comprehend the world. Pound had none; he did not hold incoherence steadily *there* as his subject but let it enter and break up his poem (as to a lesser extent it entered and damaged *The Waste Land* but as it did not "The Second Coming," whose subject was a *vision* of incoherence). He might not have broken had he been less immodest: had he undertaken less, like Yeats; or had he accepted the support of an already existing system, as Eliot came to; or had he, like Hardy, written his big poem fast and then turned to the little poems he could do justice to; had he, in other words, been sure enough of himself to admit and know his limitations. He undertook to get everything in and to do it all himself. He put on so many voices that he lost every chance of finding his own. As a citizen of the world, Pound set himself the task of saving the disordered and misery-laden civilization he was trying to incorporate into his poem and into himself. He would seek out the root causes of this

desperate trouble and then apply to society his demonstrated skill in practical politics (at least in practical literary politics) so as to remedy that trouble.

But he lacked knowledge and training in social analytics. He broke out of the enraging complexity of economic and political fact and theory by seizing upon two main principles: since democratic capitalism is the prime cause of our ills, let us turn from political freedom to a dictatorship of the strong and wise, and let us reform the monetary system so that usury, that root corruption, shall be extirpated. Nobody much listened to him, though there are always a few cranks to listen to mongers of simplistic panaceas. His political powers failed: he procured an audience with Mussolini, who was not impressed; he aimed at Roosevelt, and got to Wallace, who was not impressed. Nobody so much as cared whether he was right or wrong.

He might easily have turned to communism, as most literary radicals did in the '30's, and in fact his social tracts are sprinkled with admiration for Lenin and Marxism (as well as invective against them). But he lived in Italy, the communists talked about the Masses and the fascists about the Elite, communism was a sort of Christian heresy with a strong Jewish cast and fascism was pagan, communism was fashionable among the intelligentsia: he espoused fascism. Once again, nobody—except for some Anglo-American intellectuals—much cared. Nothing came of it. Most of the restraints of sanity loosened or broke. He ranged into madness.

The world indeed desperate, himself dubiously successful as an epic poet and clearly ineffectual as a political reformer, he must either collapse in despair or find scapegoats to blame for the troubles of the world.

Here are two excerpts from transcripts of broadcasts he made voluntarily over the Italian radio in 1943.

[to the English] the white remnants of the races of England must be found and must find a means to cohere. . . .

The old Roman Empire perished from the same follies that your kikes have squirted into your veins.

[to the American soldiers] Are you fighting for your national heritage? For the heritage of wisdom, the heritage of Washington and of Monroe, and of John Adams and Lincoln? I say you are not. You are fighting against what all these men stood for, and it will take more brains than I got to get you out of it prettily.

By any rational use of the word treason, to have broadcast such speeches was an act of treason.

It is intolerable to an idealistic optimist to suppose no one's to

blame. Always something must be done. When there is nothing else for it, culprits must be found and punished. It is intolerable for him to suppose that he, who has always wished so well, is to blame for a lot of his own distress, that tragic trouble is in the nature of things, and that we are enmeshed by a complex of social forces for which there can be no simple remedy, if any.

Pound's chief scapegoats were America, the bankers, and the Jews. America: which he felt had stultified him as a poet, which had not praised his accomplishments, and which had rejected him from the profession of college teaching.¹⁶ The bankers: because of the economic theory Pound patched together mostly from some cranky economists he happened on. The Jews: for the reasons previously suggested, and also because he identified them obscurely with usury; moreover, the people who bring the Law must be a rebel's prime antagonist. Fascism was not immoderate enough for him. Nazism's zeal for destruction was total. He went all the way: he adopted nazi anti-semitism.

But for a man of Pound's intelligence and learning to have put on so monstrous, simplistic, and mad a system of thought was itself mad, even more mad than treasonous; and that he thought those broadcasts were not treasonous was also mad. Unless madness is total it does not excuse everything a man does. By madness, I do not mean something describable and legal like insanity, or symptomatic and clinical like psychosis, but a serious disturbance of the self, within its own structure and in the way it apprehends and deals with reality.¹⁷ Some madness derives from putting on a mad system, accepting mad masters: Adolph Eichmann. These statements are from Eichmann's confession (*Life*, November 28, 1960):

I am no anti-Semite. I was just politically opposed to jews because they were stealing the breath of life from us. At heart I am a very sensitive man. I simply can't look at any suffering without trembling myself. — I once saw a soldier beat a frail old Jew over the head with a rubber club. I spoke to the soldier, reported him to his commander and demanded

¹⁶ In 1907 he taught college for a few months, in a small Indiana town. Out of spontaneous charity, he offered, on a cold night, the shelter of his room to a homeless woman of dubious status. His landlady was a pillar of respectability. He was fired. Thenceforward he was very hard on America and especially on American universities.

¹⁷ This definition is purposely vague: "self" means the less the more clearly it is circumscribed, and a line around "reality" is a flat-map version of a world of who knows how many dimensions; moreover, "serious disturbance," though it seems so commonsensical, is a Wonderland yardstick. Exactly; the soul is Wonderland.

he be punished and demoted. Himmler would not stand for that kind of thing. That is sadism.

Surely this is mad thinking. This is the system of thought that Pound put on.¹⁸

No doubt this system drove Pound, who could think, madder than it drove Eichmann, who acted but did not think; surely Eichmann is executable and Pound is not. A man can somehow put on a mad system as a mask for his own malice: an hypocrisy of madness. Is not such a one not only sicker but also worse, less honorable, than one who, thinking he is Excalibur, stands waiting in the stone for someone to come pull him out? Something of integrity can be preserved even in madness: visionary Blake and gentle Clare. Pound's madness, considerable but by no means total, was a mixture which included and indeed was dominated by vile elements, especially those which clustered around his frustrated drive for power. Perhaps he was kept from complete disintegration by being punished and restrained; as soon as the American army occupied Italy, he hastened to give himself up, and after his arrest he turned back to the exercise of his craft. This did not prevent the rant but at least made possible a few gleams of sane and pure poetry.

Contemplating Pound extends one's conception of human possibilities — that a man with qualities and gifts of so noble a kind could choose a course of political action so vile, that one man could in some measure deserve comparison to both Yeats and Eichmann.

His best was to do better what others had done well. A waste of marvels. One of ours.

¹⁸ That it was a system of thought which did not reflect his own impulses truly is evidenced by his not allowing his anti-semitism to prevent his friendship with actual persons who were Jews. So, at least, Louis Zukofsky testifies, who became and remained a friend of Pound during the years of that anti-semitism's greatest virulence.

REVIEWS

Two Dialectics of Non-Discussion

SCIENCE AND GOVERNMENT

By C. P. SNOW

Harvard University Press, 1961

Now if there is one thing a dialectician can't stand it is another dialectician. Nothing personal, of course. As we dialecticians see it, two dialecticians is simply a contradiction in terms. This follows from the admitted first principle of our science that there is only one valid question to be asked at any given time; THE QUESTION we call it in the trade. No dialectician knows this better than Mr. C. P. Snow, and in his latest tract for our times, *Science and Government*, he illustrates this principle perfectly:

Why not leave well alone? You have said yourself that not many scientists make good administrators. Why worry about science and government? Why not keep the scientists in their place, as we used to, and just call them out to give advice to wiser men?

Isn't the first, the only serious problem of our time, to save the peace? Why does it matter what we do with the scientists? Isn't it the statesman's job to save the peace? What does it matter about scientists?

I am familiar with those questions. They are asked by intelligent men. There is a lot of truth in some of them. And yet they are no good (p. 79).

They are not THE QUESTION.

Imagine for a minute the feelings of us dialecticians upon reading this passage. We know full well that once THE QUESTION is stated criticism becomes impossible. Dialectic is non-discussion. All questions are irrelevant ("no good") but THE QUESTION, and there is only one answer to a dialectical question, the right answer. Every dialectician knows that. We have only one choice: admiring silence or a technical explanation of our rival's skill.

How then are we to explain why reviewer after reviewer has missed the point of *Science and Government* and blindly persisted in criticizing its accuracy or logic, as if these things mattered? Have they not read Mr. Snow's *The Two Cultures* (Cambridge, 1959) where he reminded us that "the number two is a very dangerous number: that is why the dialectic is a dangerous process. Attempts

to divide anything into two ought to be regarded with much suspicion (pp. 9-10)"? And, if they have read this passage, are they so naive that they do not know that the person who is being warned of the dangers of the dialectic is not the reader but rather the dialectician himself? Clearly this is no time for petty professional jealousy; I must explain my rival's skill.

Two is, indeed, a very dangerous number; unskillful use of the number two has brought dialecticians into disrepute because it has made people mistake the disjunctive dichotomies that are such a necessary *part* of our art (science and traditional culture, science and government, science and religion, science and poetry, culture and anarchy, philosophy and rhetoric, being and non-being, etc.) for its essence. Inexcusable clumsiness in the manipulation of these dichotomies has produced the notorious suspicion of the dilemma ("Either . . . Or") and the rhetoric of the apocalypse ("You are either with me or against me"). Such dialectic has failed to persuade because it lost half the audience getting its argument underway, the half that got the short end of the stick. But this is bad dialectic.

True dialectic doesn't really divide anything by two. The skillful dialectician invokes such dichotomies only to rally all right minded men to his side. One half of the apparent dichotomy is found, either by inspection or by merely giving it its proper name (e.g., culture and anarchy), to be a non-alternative. Thus true dialectic doesn't really divide because it does not require a choice between two alternatives. True dialectic unites by showing us that all who really understand **THE QUESTION** must make the same choice. In essence, one problem, no choice, one solution. The solution is concealed within the problem, had we but eyes to see. A stick with only one end.

Once we understand the working of true dialectic we can see that Mr. Snow's arguments are unassailable. Thus *Science and Government* addresses itself to **THE PROBLEM** before us, "whether we live or die (p. 1)": how can we make "the cardinal choices" about the application of science to military policy with the greatest possible foresight? With the easy confidence of a true dialectician feeling his powers rising within him, Mr. Snow then notes, "No one I have read has found the right answers. Very few have even asked the right questions. The best I can do is to tell a story (p. 3)." The story takes up over half the slender book, and the remaining pages point the moral: "I want scientists active in all the levels of government (p. 80)."

How does this follow? By definition. Given **THE PROBLEM**, a need for foresight, there is no real choice between scientists and non-scientists. Non-scientists, politicians and particularly "profes-

sional administrators," "live in the short term . . . become masters of the short-term solution." Scientists are different. "Scientists have it within them to know what a future-directed society feels like, for science itself, in its human aspect, is just like that (pp. 82-3)." Scientists have the necessary foresight. At this crucial step in the argument non-dialecticians have objected: Has Mr. Snow in fact proven that scientists possess foresight, that non-scientists do not?

Yes, but in another book. Following the basic dialectical principle of one problem at a time, Mr. Snow argued in *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* that the scientific revolution has produced THE PROBLEM of our time, a future-directed outlook among the underdeveloped nations of the world which it is the task of education in the West to cope with if the West is to survive. Problem stated, science is defined as putting "the future" in one's bones, non-science as turning one's eyes to the achievements of the past or the existential problems of the present. Thus the essential argumentative structure, the basic dialectic, of the two books is identical. There is no real choice at hand. One problem, one solution.

We have now seen that Mr. Snow's tracts not only illustrate the working of dialectic, they teach it. They are also full of hints on how such arguments are to be evaluated. It is apparently too much to expect that critics who do not even understand the working of true dialectic would understand these warnings, so once again a recapitulation of Mr. Snow's points is in order. All criticism of dialectic, not surprisingly, falls into two categories, the false or irrelevant and the true. The false line of criticism is based upon a failure to grasp the essential nature of dialectic: *the solution is THE PROBLEM redefined*. Hence neither the logic nor the accuracy of detail can be criticized, for logic and detail are irrelevant. Dialectic is like poetry. It is all unity and internal coherence of form; it is a law unto itself. Its truths, accordingly, are of a higher nature than history. Mr. Snow has reminded us of this in *Science and Government* when, after summing up the moral of his narrative, he points out in a footnote that his novels rather than our naive ideas derived from the teachings of the political theorists ("Very few have even asked the right questions") are the patterns and models of the truth about the way things really are at the level of secret or "closed politics." He anticipates that some readers may be troubled by this, but Mr. Snow rejoins that they cannot dispute the truth of what he says:

It is simply the way men have to operate, in order to get anything done at all. I do not mean that as satire. *Satire is cheek*. It is the revenge of those who cannot really comprehend the world or cope with it. No, I mean my description of politics to be taken as neutral statements. So far as I have been able to observe anything, this is how the world ticks—not only our world, but also the future world one can

imagine, juster and more sensible than ours. It seems to me important that men of good will should make every effort to understand how the world ticks; it is the only way to make it tick better (p. 66).

No reviewer that I have read has caught this subtle hint that we are here confronted with universal truth. Instead, they insist upon arguing about pointless trivialities which in the language of non-dialecticians are called facts. Thus after Mr. Snow's ideas were given as the Godkin Lectures for 1960 at Harvard and excerpted under the title "Whether We Live or Die" in *Life* (3 February 1961) they were violently attacked as historical fiction [sic!] by a wartime colleague, Sir Robert Watson-Watt, "the inventor of radar," in the *Saturday Review* of 4 March 1961. Mr. Jacques Barzun, who generally has an eye for the culturally significant, objected that if this sort of thing is allowed to continue "publication will become a sort of post-mortem formality." Hardly. Not only are post-mortems notoriously difficult on living victims, as Mr. Snow's reply to his old friend in the April Fool's edition of the *Saturday Review* demonstrated, but you've also got to make sure you've got the right victim on the table. Mr. Watson-Watt missed the point, indulged in false or irrelevant criticism. We dialecticians deal in universal truths, and we turn to history only to discover a future that is inevitable from a past that is unintelligible to all but those who ask the right question.

No, only one line of true criticism is possible of *Science and Government*. This is the one which Mr. Snow, who knows what he is doing, fears most of all because it is not criticism in the ordinary sense; it is annihilation. Any sensible practitioner is careful to anticipate and suppress this ultimate dialectical weapon, counter-dialectic. A common trick is to give it a false name. "*Satire is cheek*," says Mr. Snow with emphasis, but we dialecticians are not fooled. One man's universal truths ("neutral statements") are another man's vulgar errors. What Mr. Snow is really saying here is obvious to even non-dialecticians if we rephrase it as a rhetorical question, Who can really comprehend the world or cope with it? Quite obviously only the dialectician, the man who has found THE PROBLEM with the built-in solution.

What Mr. Snow has cunningly, but to no avail, called "the satire" is really, as they would say in an old play, "The Second Dialectician." Envious of the easy success of the first, he has no recourse but to insist that the dialectic that has been put forth by a rival is not really THE PROBLEM at all!

Yet no critic I have read has taken this unanswerable line of counter-dialectic in criticizing the book. (Are there so few of us left? Apparently. For of one thing you may be sure, no dialectician has ever agreed with another.) Counter-dialectic is utterly simple,

and, at the risk of diminishing the sales of my next work, *Civilization and Barbarism*, I shall show you how it is done.

My book will, of course, be identical in dialectical structure with those of Mr. Snow. First, I shall half-state the problem. (I forgot to mention before that if THE PROBLEM is fully stated at the beginning of the argument the cat is, so to speak, out of the bag, and you don't have a series of lectures or an eighty page book. We carefully withhold the full statement of the problem until after our definitions have been refined. Such evasiveness is forced upon us by the public's love of irrelevancy and its inability to comprehend the guiding principle of our art, *the solution is always THE PROBLEM redefined.*) Isn't the first, the only serious problem of our time, to save civilization as we know it? While stating the problem I shall also engage in a little (not too much) derogation of any and all other problems, invoking what we call "the principle of puniness of all but THE PROBLEM." Science and traditional culture, existential and future directed societies, science and government, war and peace, "whether we live or die," are all irrelevancies ("no good") when we consider the real choice before us, the choice between civilization and barbarism.

Here the counter-dialectician warms to his task, for he sees "the principle of grander generality" waiting to be employed. This is the ultimate weapon, and how I shall enjoy wielding it in my next two chapters of discussion and definition. I shall begin by defining civilization as what Mr. Snow calls the traditional culture, but my definition will subsume his dichotomy by including in the traditional culture science, particularly in its history of success and failure, truth and error, triumph and gruesome little surprises. The argument is as good as over now, for in a struggle between two dialectics the bigger one always wins. Technically this is known among us dialecticians as the principle of "the first dialectician never has the last word." Then, a gradual relaxation of tension as I paint a picture of barbarism, a world without traditional culture. In the last page or two I shall briefly restate the question, now in its full form, making clear to my readers what THE PROBLEM, had they but eyes to see, really is: a non-choice between civilization and barbarism.

This probably does not sound very exciting stated in the abstract. No one knows that better than a dialectician. So we work in a lot of particular incidents and characters, write, in a word, like a historian or a novelist. The reader should, therefore, suspend his judgment until he has read my detailed discussion of the forces of barbarism which threaten civilization and my list of the principal barbarians. I shall name names. I may even tell a story. But such details must be withheld lest I find myself without any auditors on

my planned lecture tour and without any readers when the book is published.

Meanwhile I can only conclude by thanking my fellow-dialectician, Mr. C. P. Snow, for reviving public interest in dialectic and whetting the appetites of readers and publishers for bigger and better dialectics to come. Such is the glorious role of the first dialectician. He brings others into the field, each, by the inherent nature of his art, better than the last. Perhaps we can now look forward to the apotheosis of true civilization, a world where intelligent men never disagree among themselves. Instead of endless discussion leading nowhere we shall have only subsumption after subsumption, grander generality after grander generality until the last vestige of controversy and fact disappears from view.

To all this Mr. Snow points the way. His words have the true prophetic note as he reminds us of "the prime importance, in any crisis of action, of being positive what you want to do and of being able to explain it. It is not so relevant whether you are right or wrong. That is a second-order effect. But it is cardinal that you should be positive. . . . Even at the highest level of decision, men do not really relish the complexity of brute reality, and they will hare after a simple concept whenever one shows its head (pp. 73-74)."

"Exactly," we dialecticians murmur in assent, "the simpler the better."

OWEN JENKINS

THE ESQUIRE READER. New fiction from the magazine for men. Edited by Arnold Gingrich, Rust Hills, and Gene Lichtenstein. The Dial Press, New York, 1960.

Esquire has always been a hospitable and gracious magazine, and its virtues are real ones. The Petty girl cartoons are (or were) only part of it; in the early days when one was in high school *Esquire* printed stories by Scott Fitzgerald and Hemingway, so that one got to know their names anyway, even in looking at the cartoons.

Nowadays I read *Esquire* in the barber shop where I go in Northfield; I haven't brought myself to subscribe because I don't even read all the magazines I do subscribe to. Recently I read articles about the captivity of Ezra Pound in Italy after the war when they had him in a cage, and about Norman Mailer's fight with his publishers over *The Deer Park*, and Budd Schulberg's uncorseted memories of Scott Fitzgerald. I always find something.

There is danger of this kind of review turning into a lecture about

what the editors ought to do with their magazine, as well as what the writers ought to do with their stories. I am tempted to say, drop the silly label "Magazine for Men". It impressed me when I was eighteen, but this variety of wickedness really went out with the Zilch boys.

The worst part of it is that this naughty label does not do justice to the stories in the collection. Eight of the ten are not about sex at all in any important way, and the other two are about as pornographic as the writings of say De Maupassant or Theodore Dreiser. Though the stories have their own virtues of seriousness and coherence, this sort of advertisement of them lends itself to the excuse for skipping and skimming, which is bad. Things are bad enough already no matter how carefully one tries to read once over, which is about all one can do these days, and the writers will probably be hopping mad at the unappreciation of a reader who probably doesn't read so carefully as he should ought to at the best of times.

What can be said about these stories? First, that though one may not like them all alike, one does get value from reading them, considerable value. They are intelligent and sensitive, their worst faults being those of prolixity (this is undoubtedly *Esquire's* own doing in paying so generously by the inch). Second, there is great variety among them; there is really no such thing as a typical *Esquire* story, in the same sense that there is a typical *Saturday Evening Post* story or a typical *New Yorker* story.

Third, though there is good reason for liking all the stories in the collection if one is sufficiently catholic in one's taste, I liked a few better than the others. Herbert Wilner's *The Mural at Castlereigh's* sets forth the strange relationship among an entrepreneur of fake art for restaurants, a young painter who teaches at Yale Art School and who needs the money, and the proprietor of a neo-Gothic roadhouse (shades of William Harkness) who wants a mural that will be like the breath of Albion, forty foot of it. To anyone who has ever passed through New Haven the situation is interesting, and Mr. Wilner is properly ironic and skillful.

Berceuse by Alfred Chester is the Joycean confession of a Nice Girl who bears a child to the boy who later marries her, murders it before the marriage, adopts the baby some other girl bears to her husband supposedly, and learns that her husband is not the father after all. But she loves the baby anyway by this time. Nice and soupy. Mr. Chester does wonderful things with it; the language is very good, perhaps more in the manner of Ring Lardner than of Joyce, but this doesn't matter. In the author's sensitive picture of vulgarity, the bareness of the subject's mind becomes poetic.

He was miserable being not altogether passed over so I ended his poor suffering by putting the towel on his face. Then he was still. He was a he I saw. I picked him up and put him to my breast. How wellmade he was I mean so perfect with all the little veins and the tiny fingers and that little cutie birdie. My God to make something so perfect like that and it being a waste. Imagine an automobile or a washing machine being all shaped up with all the little cutie details so perfect and then all to waste. It couldn't be. And I thought What is he?

Banalities become the stuff of imagination when properly handled; Mr. Chester obviously knows what he is trying to do, and the whole thing comes off well. A poem in the grotesque mode.

Ivan Gold in *The Nickel Misery of George Washington Carver* describes the hazing of a Negro enlistee in a Georgia basic training center, the humor of it perfectly balanced against the horror. The hero finally falls to his death from a tower in the obstacle course after a great deal of kicking around by his comrades in arms and by the cadre of course, who are themselves victims of the service-fostered complex to kick and be kicked. It is a beautiful study of the peculiar kind of sadistic fun one has as an enlisted man in the Army basic—and I wish it had been around to refer to years ago when people were exclaiming over Private Hargrove.

Migdone, by Jesse Bier, the story of a psychiatrist who attempts to cure whatever it is that is wrong with his boyhood friend in Hoboken, has something to recommend it. Though the point is not altogether clear in the end what has happened, except that the healer suddenly finds himself sick with the realization that life is more complicated than he thought it was and that his patients get worse just as they seem to be getting better, the idea itself is stimulating, and perhaps salutary.

I did object to the general unpleasantness of Leslie Fiedler's *Nude Croquet*, though I admire the intelligence at a safe distance. I found it simply heavy-handed. This is an account of a class reunion, so to speak, of an aging group of formerly free spirits all with one exception having given up Marxian dedication in favor of a regular wage. The scene is a horribly fake baronial mansion set in an unbelievably vast estate somewhere in New Jersey; it is all rather like the *Tales of Hoffman*. The lonely hold-out, after haranguing his faithless fellows throughout a verbose and drunken evening, is finally turned upon and beaten to death with croquet mallets. One may derive a certain grim amusement at this, but I am not even sure that this is the real point of the story. It is all very dialectical, and the revelry is gross and tedious. One feels that surely these people should have more fun in them. The characters are certainly the most unprepossessing lot that one may meet in many a long day. It is a long story too.

Philip Roth's *Expect the Vandals* is too long as well, for what it says. Two American soldiers find themselves the only survivors on a Pacific island after an abortive American landing, and the suicide of the Japanese garrison. They manage to maintain themselves in a desperate way until the arrival of the men who come to stake out the goats for a bomb test, and sail away with their eyes fixed on the mushroom cloud. A great deal of misery and it all seems rather pointless, though perhaps this is the whole idea, and there may be readers who thrive on this kind of reflection.

There may also be those spirits dedicated to the slaughter of animals who will enjoy the account of the slaying of the deer with bow and arrow, and its cutting up or butchery with primitive tools. Technically impeccable, I have no doubt, but I found Thomas Williams' *Goose Pond* rather dull, simply. Its qualities of being a chaste and workmanlike story command admiration, but it bears the mark of the workshop on it a little too plainly to be exactly a comfortable kind of thing.

Vance Bourjaily, the best known face in the group, is amusing and intelligent in *Varieties of Irreligious Experience*, but the whole essay is somewhat inconsequential. The first variety, of penitential experience in a horrid military prep school, has more interest intrinsically than the second, of some rather desperate carryings on in a Syrian cave charnal house, and I suppose there must be some connection between the two.

Among the Dangs by George P. Elliot as a satire on anthropological research is perhaps a little too much of a good thing. Not that there aren't some good passages; some of the narrator's experiences in laboratory and field are very funny indeed, but there aren't quite enough of them.

I missed the point of John Barth's *The Remobilization of Jacob Horner*. (Jacob for Jack?) I felt a twinge of sympathy with the hero, a fugitive from the graduate school of Johns Hopkins, which is a solemn enough place by all accounts, but I could not understand the idea of the strange doctor and his institution to which the hero flies. Particularly why this doctor had to be a Negro, unless this is a kind of subtle and unfashionable insinuation that the kind of Devil into whose hands the hero has fallen is a Black Man.

HUCKLEBURY SQUIB

ALEXANDRIA: A HISTORY AND A GUIDE

by E. M. FORSTER

Anchor Books. 1961 \$.95

In the sixties of the last century, as every schoolboy knows, the Japanese were hard at work attempting to reproduce in their homeland the civilization of the distant West. It was then—according to a legend current among American naval officers before Pearl Harbor—that Queen Victoria, eager to assist, presented the Japanese Emperor with an obsolete and battered cruiser as the beginning of a modern navy. The Japanese were very pleased, and, after they had learned to sail the vessel, inquired if they could buy several more like it. Alas, there were no more to be had—any sister-ships had long since been scrapped. And so they decided to build their own cruisers. They worked hard and long, and they succeeded so well that soon the Emperor had two more cruisers in his fleet, perfect duplicates of the original down to every carefully made dent and patch on the outmoded boilers, every scrupulously splintered railing, every streak of rust at the hawse-hole.

Something of the same anxiously imitative spirit must have animated the editors of Anchor Books as they prepared this new edition of a little-known work of E. M. Forster, *Alexandria: A History and a Guide* (first edition, Alexandria, 1922; second, the same, 1938). First of all, the book is obsolete. Written during World War I, it is more than forty years out of date, and consequently useless as a guide. Nor is it of much value as a history of Alexandria, since it is full of blunders of one sort or another. And, like the Japanese who so carefully preserved each imperfection of their obsolete cruiser, the publishers of this new edition have chosen—after, one assumes, some deliberation—to preserve carefully each mistake, each flaw, even each misprint found in the first edition of the book, and to send it forth again with all its imperfections upon it. Such fidelity to error may be of some interest to the Forster specialist, but hardly to anyone else, and it is unlikely that the specialist is precisely the audience the Anchor people had in mind. Why then should this book appear? Is the eminence of the author, the sales value of his name, enough to justify such a sloppy piece of editing and publishing?

It seems even more unpardonable when one realizes that Forster himself acknowledged the imperfection of the book when he pub-

lished a revised and corrected edition in 1938. For some reason the publishers have not chosen to reprint this version, less out of date by some fifteen years and free from at least the more obvious blunders of the first edition. For example, by 1938 Forster realized that the British army which invaded Egypt in 1801 numbered 15,000 men under Sir Ralph Abercromby, not 1500 under Sir Ralph Abercrombie, and that the vivid description of the city as it was in 1610 was not written by John Sandys (otherwise unknown) but by the poet George Sandys, more famous perhaps as the first man to attempt literary work in the confines of the United States (he translated Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in Virginia, in the six-teen-twenties). He was aware that historians censured rather than censored the Ptolemies for their unconventional ways of showing fraternal affection, that there was no longer a Sultan, that the Graeco-Roman Museum had been considerably enlarged, that the Rue Rosette had been rechristened Rue Fuad I (it has since been rechristened again, and is now Avenue El-Horreya). He knew that Captain Norden, the Danish traveller, had visited Alexandria in 1737 and not 1757, that the Arab walls were built in 881 (not 811), that the British expedition of 1807 was led by General Fraser (not Frazer), that the brief account of the Battle of Alexandria (21 March, 1801) needed to be expanded and clarified, and that the sweeping assertion that Alexandria had dropped to total insignificance during the Middle Ages was ridiculously inaccurate and had to be unsaid. Forster made all of these necessary corrections before he allowed the second edition of the book to appear, but in spite of his thorough revision, the reader of this third edition finds it all undone. Here is poor Abercrombie back tramping the desert with his 1500 men, here are the historians busily censoring the Ptolemies, here is the ghostly John Sandys, and the vanished Sultan rides once more along the vanished Rue Rosette—all the errors have crept merrily back into their places. The new wings (new as of 1934) have been ruthlessly clipped from the Graeco-Roman Museum in the maps which have been carefully redrawn to show us the building as it was in 1922. Nor has the bibliography fared any better. Though Forster revised it to include important books about Alexandria published during the twenties and thirties, the reader looks in vain for them here.

By these complaints I do not wish to suggest that the 1938 text is an entirely trustworthy basis for a third edition, either. Both early versions are alike in erroneously assuming that Nicaea is on the Black Sea and that Actium is on the Adriatic. No reputable scholar now believes that Achilles Tatius was a bishop (nor did they in 1922). The Mosque of Abou el Abbas Moursi was not built but *re-built* in 1767. If there has been no Sultan in Egypt since

March 1922, there has been no King since July 1952. It was a shot from HMS *Inflexible*, not HMS *Superb*, that blew up the powder magazine at Fort Adda during the bombardment of 1882, and the shot was not fired "in the evening" but about 1:30 p.m. The Timonium (more properly, Timoneum), Mark Antony's island hermitage where he planned to imitate Timon's misanthropy, was just off the palace, not off the island of Pharos. The present Greek Patriarch is not named Photius (d. 1925; the present incumbent is Christopher II, who has been reigning since June 1939), and he does not hold any position "from the Sultan of Turkey direct." Furthermore, the Patriarchate was moved to Alexandria neither sixty nor eighty years ago, but in 1847, and His Beatitude's full title is not "Patriarch of Alexandria, Libya, Pentapolis, Ethiopia, and all Egypt," but, much more magniloquently, "Pope and Patriarch of the Great City of Alexandria, Libya, Pentapolis, Ethiopia and all Africa, Father of Fathers, Shepherd of Shepherds, Pontiff of Pontiffs, Thirteenth Apostle, and Oecumenical Judge." The Ptolemies did not marry their own sisters in imitation of the god Osiris, but because their pharaonic predecessors had done so. Many of these mistakes are minor ones, but taken all together they add up to a book which has, for one reason or another, an error on every fourth or fifth page. Most of them can be blamed on the publishers, and all of them could have been avoided by someone's spending an afternoon in a well-equipped library.

So much for the disturbing flaws in this little book. What of its virtues, which have already moved some sober reviewers to near rapture? Well, there is the joy of a verbal game well-played. There is the pleasure of seeing a master of style at work, a master who is not above a certain sly parody. Forster has long since proclaimed himself an admirer of the fine, clear, faintly disdainful prose of the old Murray handbooks and of what he calls, in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, "the hidden charms of Baedeker." In that novel he is speaking, to be sure, of the evocative power of almost any page of those magnificent guidebooks, their ability to summon up a whole landscape and way of life for the receptive browser. But there is an even subtler delight in the delicately bathetic prose, the brilliant descents and *volte-faces* that are the signature not of Baedeker himself but of the nameless genius who translated the books into a remarkable English. Consider, for example, the eggshell fragility of the following sentence from *Southern Italy and Sicily*: "The popular idea of cleanliness in Southern Italy is behind the age, dirt being perhaps neutralized in the opinion of the natives by the brilliancy of their climate." Or, from the same volume, the bland insistence that "the traveller should adopt the Neapolitan custom of rejecting fish that are not quite fresh," and the warning against eating oysters

from Santa Lucia "where the shellfish are kept in undesirable proximity to the mouths of the sewers." (Once begun, it is almost impossible to stop quoting Baedeker. I will report one more and have done, the drily lyrical sentences from *Southern France* that describe the countryside near Beziers in words that recall at once Milton's Eden and the *lacrimae rerum*: "pleasant walks to the south of the city. Guide 3fr. Adders abound.") In the guide portion of this book Forster has used this kind of writing too sparingly, but in the historical portion there are frequent examples. We learn of the heretic Arius that "Learned and sincere, tall, simple in his dress, persuasive in his speech, he was accused by his enemies of looking like a snake, and of seducing, in the theological sense, 700 virgins." Gnosticism "taught that the world and mankind are the result of an unfortunate blunder." "In spite of his sincerity," Plotinus "became fashionable, and the psychic powers that he had acquired not only gained him, on four occasions, the Mystic Vision which was the goal of his philosophy, but also discovered a necklace which had been stolen from a rich lady by one of her slaves."

But even here one has a reservation. These sentences and others like them are a joy to read, but they point up a disturbing flaw that is apparent whenever Forster attempts to explicate complicated modes of thought. If he is weak on history, his theology is even weaker, a serious problem in a book whose core is an account of the "spiritual city" of Alexandria. Lytton Strachey's sardonic account of the Oxford Movement is hugely entertaining, but by turning the whole episode into rich comedy he fails to leave us the slightest opportunity of appreciating the seriousness and sincerity of the people involved. In the same way Forster's account of Gnostics and Monothelites is written with too evident a concern for the absurd. His treatment makes it almost impossible to believe that intelligent people ever took Neo-Platonism or Monophysism seriously, that they were, and perhaps to some still are, living issues. It all adds up to more than an "arid theological Odyssey."

There are one or two other blind spots. There is a trace of the Victorian preference for the Hellenic over the Hellenistic in the frequent use of the word *decadent* when speaking of Ptolemaic or Byzantine Egypt, a preference for a Greece of woodsy mystery and athleticism unhampered by thought — and too much thought, in one guise or another, is the villain of all Forster's works. There is a rather simplified version of Islam — even the English of Chandrapore would approve of Islam as it is presented here, as a sound, no non-sense kind of religion for soldiers impatient of the theological subtleties of subject peoples. Coupled with what seems to be a strong bias against modern Egypt, for reasons that may be justified but are not entirely clear, it is, in its attitudes, in some ways a curious

book for an author who was at the same time at work on *Passage to India*.

And in some ways not. It is one of the only two books that Forster published between *Howards End* (1910) and *Passage to India* (1924), and it is of the greatest interest as an approach to the latter work. (The other book of this period, *Pharos and Pharillon*, 1923, is also about Alexandria. It is a series of essays describing episodes from Alexandrian history, and would have been a far better choice for republication than the guide book were it not marred here and there by a kind of jocose attitude toward Jews that is no longer considered very funny.) Inevitably some of the major concerns of *Passage to India* are touched on here, especially what is the central problem of that novel, as it is of *Alexandria*, divinity and man's relation to divinity. In *Passage to India* Aziz is sustained by an affirmation of Moslem orthodoxy, Fielding worships a kind of liberal humanism, the British officials are sure that their Imperial and civilizing mission is divinity manifest. Mrs. Moore, who is most consciously seeking God, is at first repelled by her revelation of divinity as a hollow "boum . . . boum," a divinity with no message for mankind, indifferent to the human need for comfort and law. Like Professor Godbole and the other Hindus, she realizes after her visit to the Caves that God cannot be actively won, that divinity can be touched only by a total surrender of personality; the final message of the festival, where the Hindus find their god in grease and dust, is that there is no theological way to God. "God si love." In its espousal of the irrational and its distrust of ingenuity and logic *Passage to India* is a deliberate rejection of all the unbridled speculation that the "spiritual city" of Alexandria represents to Forster. He derides the Alexandrian philosophers' over-subtle answers to the great problem they posed themselves, God's "relation to the rest of the universe and particularly to man," their "favourite problem of linking human and divine." They wanted God to be "both far and close," he remarks, and it is clear that his meditations upon these matters while writing *Alexandria*, and his recognition of the human tendency to "magnify the human in the divine" was the theme that gave form to his scattered impressions and memories of India, and thus shaped his most important novel.

ROBERT TRACY

URSUS MINOR, OR, THE BEAR AS SWAIN

Winnie-ille-Pu ab A.A. Milne,

Latina reddita ab Alexandro Lenard.

E. P. Dutton and Co. MCMLX \$3.00

Mus rusticus et mus urbanus primas partes agunt in jucundissima fabula latina, quam scripsit Q. Flaccus Horatius ut vitam rusticam laudaret, pro qua poetae romani Musam persaepe invocaverunt. Sed Musa hujus fabulae A.A. Milnei nec rustica nec urbana, sed suburbana. Actores commode et suaviter vivunt. Nec res heroicas gerunt nec heroice ipsi gestiunt; facinum non petunt, et si inveniunt laborant aliquid. In his silvis apricis — duco easdem pro locutione barbara, Park Forest, paradisum silvestre — hae bestiolae convivia extollent super vires potestatemque. Vix romani, credo, sunt. Anseres custodes bellicosi Capitolii eos haud cognoscant, nec lupa Romuli Remique, nec strix Minervae, incolae omnes mundi tenebrosioris saeviorisque. Locus amoenus ubi vivunt Winnie-ille-Pu, Porcellus, Ior et alii, nimis blandulus videtur. Lector sensum terroris in corde rerum requirit, quem *Ventum in Salicibus* permanet (porro, in extremo libri, cantus Pui imitationem miseram fervidi canti Domini Bufonis videtur), aut *Petrum Cuniculum*, aut etiam sensum discriminis et periculi in *Fabulis Avunculi Vigglii*. In *Vento in Salicibus* ubertate et textu scripturae fruimur, quod sensum movent, item sensu aliquando boni victoriae super periculos veros; hic liber adversus exsanguis esse videtur.

Tanto libri personae. Jurgium nedum cum consilio. "Fabula, aut apologus," sic Johnson nos monet in *Vitis Poetarum* (Gay), "videtur, in statu vero, narrationem in qua naturae irrationales, et inanimae aliquando, arbores loquuntur, non tantum ferae, pro educatione ethica, finguntur agere et dicere cum curis et studiis humanis." Educatio ethica clementer abest, sive in extremo libri donum, capsula pro graphidibus, artes bonas et eruditionem repraesentandi et ita sapientiam celebrandi gratia intenditur. Mens magis graecanica quam romana, plus dulcis quam utilis. Sed fabula est, bestiolae agunt et loquuntur, et Ior magnus tristis actor, victima aeterna, et amor Pui pro Christophoro in simili idyllii est. Vero, Liber Sustinentis praelegere ad Ursum inter Angusta Arte infixum consolandum idoneum. Pu, in aeternum vive!

ROBERTUS TRACY

D. FITTS SERVVS MVSARVM DOMNO R.

WHITTEMORE

EDITORI MAGNIFICO SALVTEM D.

I: Non est cur multa dicam, venerabilis frater, de sententiis luculentis ab illo critico tuo D. Roberto Traceio exhibitis: rem Milneam satis argute tetigit, & justam querendi rationem non invenio. sunt qui autumant illum libellum Puicum magis emeticum esse quam emendum; sed tales cynici propriarum potius animarum egritudinem quam rei veritatem denudescunt. quis enim est homo tam saxeo donatus corde tamque, ut ita dicam, lithicus atque catamortuus animo, qui surdis rejiciat auribus hec Puica incantamenta? me non tantum lastimat, ita adjuvet me Deus, illa concepcio de animalibus lalantibus & transvestitis quantum lambastat animam meam minax ista corruptio sermonis quam displagat Latina versio. hoc dominiarium periculi: latet et in salicibus professor. quanta & qualis Latinitas, vel apcius dicerem labor & ruina in siliquas Porcilatinitatis! nec veniam satis video in illa patenti excusacione, scilicet ut ossamenta aucthoris phluphphamenta convalident traductoris. II: Licet dictitaverit illud quod dixit Johnson ille stupendus. quid ad rem? licet discerpserint cutissimi illi fabuliste tota illa animalia — mures ursos anseres cuniculos rattos cangaruos heffalumpo — de IV cosmi quaterniis, & commugiant hec omnia ad fracasandum insomnium nostrum: cui momenti, minime cui importancie? novus instat Alaricus, novus, inquam, Brennus. inflammantur capitolia nostra, anseres barbicuuntur. et recte vox se habet: barbari enim decoquunt. III: Quid? ut pueri innocentes, ut virgines nostre dedicatissime, ut cane matrone, ut senes dandruffico consumpti labore in MMM X aulis — ut denique hi omnes ita sunt decepti atque concatenati in laqueis idiomatis falsi! illa tua debitas, caramice, Editor magnifice, clarissima conclamat claritate et ad clariorem causam hortatur: salvacionem dico purissime nec non et veracissime lingue Latine. jam te exspectat respublica; liliata super caput corona jam gyratur, frater, tibi. exsurge; quid moraris? IV: Vale.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

THE FUTURE: CONTROLLED

I don't know about you, but the child-care experts have me scared silly. They are on our necks about everything — answering baby's questions, combing his hair, choosing the proper schools, the proper clothes, the proper toys, the proper pets, etc. A wrong guess anywhere, and junior's psyche is damaged forever, they tell us. Doesn't it come down to this?: everything we do, everything we say can be held against us. Frankly, I am about ready to crack under the strain.

So is my neighbor. The two of us think we have found a short cut, at least in the area of politics. Based on the innocent questions most frequently fired at us by the little ones, we devised short-answer charts that promise to keep their future political beliefs well in line. You take the party of your choice, as they say:

QUESTION:	DEMOCRATS ANSWER:	REPUBLICANS ANSWER:
Why is the grass green?	So that the little people may enjoy looking at it.	Because I weed and water it.
How soon will I be a grown-up?	When you are ready. No one can say exactly when maturity will come.	Not for a long time. It takes many years of experience to prepare for the job.
When will I get an allowance?	As soon as you show the need for it.	As soon as you show some sign of fiscal responsibility.
How much will I get?	35 cents a week.	25 cents a week to start; 35 cents if you work hard.

Is America the best country in the world?

Son, we are entering an internationalist era where individual countries are no longer important.

Son, we are entering an internationalist era where individual countries are no longer important, but yes, America is the best country in the world.

Can my father beat up everybody else's father?

What a silly question.

Yes.

What will I be when I grow up?

The sky is the limit: anything you want.

Whatever you have the ability to be.

Are people better now than they were in Adam's day?

Yes.

No.

What is the difference between boys and girls?

Not too much. Girls are used to wearing skirts. Boys are used to wearing pants.

Girls stay home and raise children. Boys go out and work.

Where do babies come from?

The Government.

Your local Chamber of Commerce.

DOUGLAS M. DAVIS

CORRESPONDENCE

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON HYMAN'S REVIEW OF *PYTHON*

With considerable interest, of course, I read Stanley Hyman's review of my book *Python* in *The Carleton Miscellany* (Fall 1960, pp. 124-127). And I was pleased that he approved of so much that I had to say in it. He found fault, however, as I expected he would, with my few remarks on origins of myth. He probably gave readers of the review the impression that my main purpose in *Python* was to advance a non-ritualistic theory of myth. Actually, my remarks on myth origins are peripheral and do not affect *Python's* main thesis: that the Apollo-Python myth is an interesting variant of a widespread myth type which was Near Eastern in origin; that the archetype was a myth of world beginnings, the winning of cosmos from chaos; the *Origins* mentioned in the subtitle are the Asiatic antecedents of the Python myth. Since Mr. Hyman misunderstands and misstates my peripheral speculative statements, and thus gives his reader a distorted impression of *Python*, I offer the following corrections.

Mr. Hyman calls me a Euhemerist (a term of opprobrium among the ritual interpreters of myth), saying flatly that I think that "myths are distorted trivial history, as old Euhemerus argued when he found the origin of Herakles and the Golden Apples of Hesperides in a thief stealing oranges." Mr. Hyman, as everybody knows, finds Euhemerists behind every tree (much as Irving Babbitt found Rousseau lurking everywhere); and so his accusation need not be taken too seriously. I want to make clear, however, that I am not really a Euhemerist, and that I did not say anything which, properly understood, should lead anybody to suppose that I am. Since in *Python* I deal with the Hesperides myth, and since Mr. Hyman immediately follows the quoted statement with "Fontenrose explains: . . .," the reader of the review is likely to understand that I have accepted this so-called Euhemeristic interpretation of that myth. I have not done so, nor, in fact, did Euhemerus, so far as anybody knows, ever "argue" thus. Mr. Hyman's remarks on Euhemerus here and elsewhere reveal that he has no knowledge of the content of Euhemerus' *Sacred Scripture*, most remains of which are found in books five and six of Diodorus' *Historical Library*. Euhemerus' book was rather like *Gulliver's Travels* or More's *Utopia*: an imagi-

nary travel account which contained a description of a Utopian paradise in a distant land. There, says Euhemeros, he found an inscription which told how Uranos, Kronos, and Zeus had been kings on earth; Zeus was called a god by his subjects while he ruled on earth, and thus his worship as a god was established; other gods too were originally kings on earth. In fact, Euhemeros did not argue anything: he merely told a story. But he has bequeathed the term Euhemerism to us as a theory of the origin of gods (rather than of the origin of myths; I believe that gods can usefully be distinguished from stories in which gods are characters). The kind of myth interpretation which Hyman cites concerning the Apples of Hesperides is usually called rationalistic, and it was employed in antiquity by Palaiphatos and others in just so crude a fashion, although I cannot find the "thief stealing oranges" in any ancient source.

Now if I were a naive Euhemerist or rationalist, as Hyman represents me to be (although I am not even a sophisticated one), I would say that the archetypal combat myth, the forerunner of the Apollo-Python myth, was a distorted, mythicized account of a specific combat between a man and a huge reptile, or between two human fighters one of whom was named Dragon or Python), a fight that really happened at a particular time in a particular place, although the factual particulars were lost or changed in the mythical distortion. This I do *not* say. What I *do* say about the origins of the combat myth is this in part: "No doubt the combat theme was suggested by actual struggles that men, as herdsman or as hunters, had with ferocious beasts and dreadful reptiles and sea creatures." In these words I say that men's experiences of combat *suggested* the *theme* of combat, the central episode of the myth. The combat myth simply made use of familiar features of experience; its combat is abstracted from experience like the combats of dreams or novels; its monstrous enemy is suggested by creatures that are dangerous or merely grotesque, frightening in appearance. Early men did have exciting encounters with both wild beasts and with human enemies (in *Python* I also mention encounters with brigands and the like); and the transition from human to bestial antagonist is easy enough among men who did not draw a hard and fast line between man and beast. That is what I say, and not that the combat myth is a distorted memory of some "whirl with an octopus," as Mr. Hyman says I do.

But Hyman derives the mythical combat only from ritual combat; and even after the myth has begun, nothing but ritual can ever affect it. And what suggested a ritual combat? Apparently nothing; I gather from Mr. Hyman's remarks, both in the review and elsewhere, that a ritual combat had no connection with real combats. However, I firmly believe that neither a myth nor a ritual can have a

combat in it unless the tellers or actors were familiar with combats; and that every part of a myth's or ritual's content, as of a dream's, must be derived from the content of human experience, however transformed and distorted such experience may become in the myth-making, as in the dream-making, process. It should now be plain that although I do not accept the ritual theory of myth origins *in toto*, my statements in *Python* do not contradict it at all.

Mr. Hyman judges my "theoretical contentions" to be "a jumble of earlier unsatisfactory theories that [the ritualists'] work outmoded." He says,

We are asked to believe that after someone tells a story about a funny thing that happened to him on his way to the campfire that day, and someone else marvels it up a bit, it diffuses widely, and people all over the world recite it on their holy days. . . . Finally, the myth . . . is used as a key to explain rites that have mysteriously and independently evolved without any previous story or logic, and it fits them.

I have not asked anyone to believe anything of the sort: this is pure distortion of what I said; but the reader of the review who has not read *Python* will be led to believe that this is really my absurd theory of myth origins, when it is really a gross misrepresentation. Mr. Hyman throws together my statements on the background of the combat *theme* with my suggestion (250 pages later) that "man's first narratives were accounts of striking events of the immediate past: extraordinary perils and adventures during hunts, migrations, explorations, encounters with strangers. Such early narratives would soon turn to legend, . . ." Thus I thought it possible that legends were the earliest kind of traditional narrative, and that folktales and myths first appeared later, fictions suggested by distorted narratives of events (or by true narratives, for that matter). But I did not mean that *every* single myth has to start out as a legend based on an actual event. Once you have myths, why can't they suggest new myths? Furthermore I made it plain in *Python* that the rituals "evolved" from magical rites and spells, which did not enact a story; all rituals, I believe, are magical in essence, and I do not agree with Theodor Gaster (in the new condensed edition of *The Golden Bough*) that a distinction should be made between magical and imitative rituals (dramatic petitions).

And did I say that myths are "distorted trivial history"? Did I deny "that the evolution of completed culture traits is always away from serious usage, never toward it"? I did not. Are migrations, raids, hunts, quests, perilous journeys, so trivial? Is it a funny story to be told by the campfire when a mighty horde comes and drives your tribe from its hunting grounds? Is it a good joke when the country becomes infested with wolves that prey upon the game or the flocks and even attack men? Obviously such events must have

been occurring for millennia in prehistoric times, and were extremely serious for the people affected by them: they concerned the food supply, the tribal habitat, the very welfare and existence of a community. Then when men animistically imagined a conflict of winter and summer, rain and drought, fertility and blight, would they not see in it all the fury and violence of real combats and struggles? Such memories have gone into every myth that contains combat, most of which do not conform to the particular myth type which I studied in *Python*: and this type I did not find everywhere on earth, contrary to what Mr. Hyman reports. Mr. Hyman seems to interpret my words to mean that I see all legend and folktale headed toward this particular combat-myth type, which then spreads everywhere and becomes associated with rituals, "and it fits them." As to the fit, my final chapter is devoted to demonstrating that it does *not* fit the rituals of festivals with which it was specifically associated in tradition. That is, the programs of festivals expressly said to commemorate the god's victory over the dragon have no direct or feature-by-feature correspondence to the content of the myths in the particular forms that were associated with these festivals; in fact, there is very little correspondence at all. But Mr. Hyman says that here I was "deliberately" refusing to see correspondences, and implies that he could demonstrate the harmony of these myths and rituals, if he had time to do so. Well, a demonstration is what I want to see; I failed to see a close fit in the instances which I studied. I await enlightenment, but I shall receive it only from a rigorous study that will cite chapter and verse; *ex cathedra* abstractions and generalities will not convince me.

The foregoing remarks are meant to set the record straight, although they do not exhaust Mr. Hyman's inaccuracies. The issue which he raises, the validity of the ritual interpretation of myth, I shall deal with in an article whose place of publication I cannot yet say. Readers of *Carleton Miscellany* should be told now that the ritual interpretation is *not* generally accepted at the present time, as Mr. Hyman says it is, when he says that we have "known better for a long time" than what he misstates as my position. In fact, I know of no competent anthropologist, folklorist, or classicist (of none at all, in fact, unless you call Lord Raglan an anthropologist) who accepts the view which Mr. Hyman considers to be well established. But it does happen to be all the rage at present among literary critics, none of whom has done any of the spade work in mythological study; and readers of literary reviews may very well be under the impression that the ritual view is well founded. It is not—not yet anyway.

JOSEPH FONTENROSE

OF PROVINCIAL EDITORS

(Editor's note: This correspondence resulted from our return of a poem submitted to us.)

April 11, 1961

Racial prejudice, white supremacy, the straightjacket morality of white protestantism, and gross ignorance of poetic traditions (other than that of 19th century Victorian romantic priggish English verse) all go hand in hand. The "tradition" of ignorance is upheld by the academic literary journals in the U.S., to maintain a "complacency" in the face of the proven superiority of other traditions.

Have you august gentlemen ever thought of the existence of a Greco-Sino-Samurai-African literary heritage?

Down with literary white jingoism and snobbery!

D. R. WANG

April 15, 1961

Dear Mr. Wang:

I was astonished by your postcard. If I remember correctly we returned your poems with a printed rejection slip, which is our conventional procedure with all contributions that we haven't anything very sensible to say about. If I did write in a personal comment which offended you I certainly apologize — no offense was intended and I can't imagine what it was that I said.

We cannot print one-tenth of the work we receive. Nor can we undertake to give detailed explanations of why we have decided not to print each manuscript. We are governed in our selections by our own tastes, which are admittedly faulty but are all we have. We certainly have no case to make for the superiority of the "19th Century Victorian romantic priggish English" tradition, as you suggest—but anyway such issues simply do not arise in our readings of individual poems.

Sincerely,

REED WHITEMORE

April 19, 1961

Taste is partly developed thru life-long cultivation of the fine arts, thru dissociation, thru discrimination against the mediocre (separating the chaff from the wheat). Trouble with 9/10 of American literary editors is their gross ignorance. How can anyone who is not

thoroughly conversant with *the traditions* (note: not the English tradition) be qualified to judge a Chinese poet whose literary forefathers include Ch'u Yuan, Li Po, Chaucer, Yeats, Mayakovsky, Artaud, Brecht, etc.?

For your education, read my "Notes on Chinese Poetry: Highlights from Ch'u Yuan to Mao Tse-tung," forthcoming in KULCHER No. 3

D. R. WANG

OF IRONOLOGY

April 1, 1961

I should like to congratulate Professor Booth on his impressive discovery. It is the first major breakthrough in this area since the discovery of Jenkinson's Law ("Everybody's crazy").

MARCHETTE CHUTE

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS — *Continued from page 2*

kel's poems and Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* into French.

GEORGE P. ELLIOTT's *Among the Dangs* was reviewed in our last issue. Mr. Elliott is scheduled to teach at the Riviera (WOW) Writers Conference this summer.

JOHN MONTAGUE, a young Irish poet, has had two books of poems published in England. Of the poem printed in this issue he wrote, "if it's any help to you Robert Graves thinks it's wonderful but since he regards it as being about the destruction of man by the sexual Goddess, I wouldn't trust his opinion." He wrote later to say that maybe Robert Graves was right, adding, "Yesterday I wrote a poem about walking a dog and today I see that it is about the relationship between body and soul."

DONALD OFFEN edits "ODYSSEY, now entering its second year of suspended publication in an attempt to beat the old FURIOSO record. Had poems in Hedley's old INFERNO and a nag called GRIFFIN when a teenage hot shot; later in COAST-

LINEs, PATTERNS, SPARROW, and ODYSSEY (lots here — in fact every issue)."

NANCY SULLIVAN lives in Narragansett, Rhode Island and teaches at Brown. Her work has appeared in *Poetry* and elsewhere.

THOMAS WILLIAMS has published two novels, *Ceremony of Love* (1955) and *Town Burning* (1959), and has another coming out in the fall (Macmillan) called *The Night of Trees*. His stories in *Esquire* have been reprinted in the O'Henry collection and in Martha Foley's annual. He is an instructor of English at the University of New Hampshire.

Vital information about the other contributors to this issue can be found (probably) in earlier issues of the *Miscellany*. It should, however, be said of JACK LUDWIG (who did a review for us earlier) that Knopf is publishing a novel of his soon, and that a story of his which appeared in the *Noble Savage* (of which he is an editor) was reprinted in the latest O'Henry collection.

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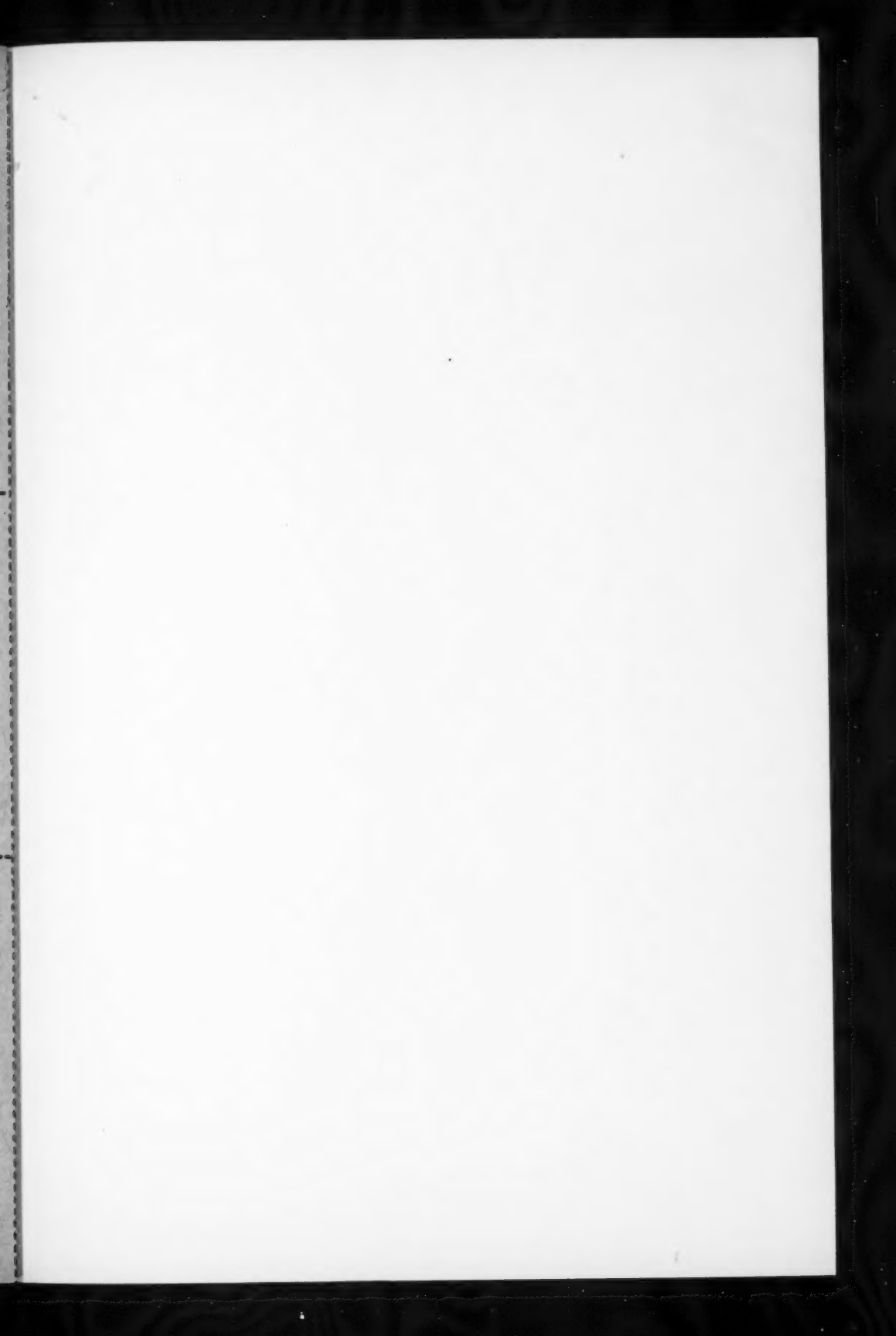
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“Richard Tottel was printer and bookseller and his *Miscellany* . . . was a goldmine to its publishers. . . . I take it to be essentially a Drab Age anthology.”

—C. S. Lewis, *English Literature
in the Sixteenth Century*